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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

SELF-REVEALED

A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY BASED MAINLY ON HIS OWN WRITINGS

BY

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Benjamin Franklin Self-Revealed

CHAPTER I

Franklin's Personal Characteristics

THE precise explanation of the great concourse of friends that Franklin drew about him, at the different stages of his long journey through the world, is to be found partly in his robust, honorable character and mental gifts. The sterner virtues, which are necessarily the foundations of such esteem as he enjoyed, he possessed in an eminent degree. An uncommonly virile and resolute spirit animated the body, which was equal in youth to the task of swimming partly on and partly under water from near Chelsea to Blackfriars, and of exhibiting on the way all of Thevenot's motions and positions as well as some of its own, and which shortly afterwards even sported about the becalmed Berkshire in the Atlantic almost with the strength and ease of one of the numerous dolphins mentioned by Franklin in his Journal of his voyage on that ship from England to America. He hated cruelty, injustice, rapacity and arbitrary conduct. It was no idle or insincere compliment that Burke paid him when he spoke of his "liberal

and manly way of thinking." How stoutly his spirit met its responsibilities in Pennsylvania, prior to the Declaration of Independence, we have seen. The risks incident to the adoption of that declaration it incurred with the same fearless courage. Of all the men who united in its adoption, he, perhaps, was in the best position to know, because of his long residence in England, and familiarity with the temper of the English monarch and his ministry, what the personal consequences to the signers were likely to be, if the American cause should prove unsuccessful. He had a head to lose even harder to replace than that of his friend Lavoisier, he had a fortune to be involved in flame or confiscation, the joy of living meant to him what it has meant to few men, and more than one statement in his writings affords us convincing proof that, quite apart from the collective act of all the signers in pledging their lives, fortunes and sacred honor to the "glorious cause," he did not lose sight of the fact that the Gray Tower still stood upon its ancient hill with its eye upon the Traitor's Gate, and its bosom stored with instruments of savage vengeance. Indeed, it was the thought that his son had been engaged against him in a game, in which not only his fortune but his neck had been at stake, that made it so difficult for him, forgiving as he was, to keep down the bile of violated nature. But, when the time came for affixing his signature to the Declaration, he not only did it with the equanimity of the rest, but, if tradition may be believed, with a light-hearted intrepidity like that of Sir Walter Raleigh jesting on the scaffold with the edge of the axe. "We must all hang together," declared John Hancock, when pleading for unanimity. "Yes," Franklin is said to have replied, "we must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

The inability of old age, partly from sheer loss of animal vigor, and partly from the desire for peace, produced by

the general decline in vividness of everything in a world, that it is about to quit, to assert itself with the force of will and temper, that belongs to us in our prime, is one of the most noticeable phenomena of the later stages of human existence. But John Adams to the contrary, the evidence all tends to show that the resolution of character exhibited by Franklin in the heyday of his physical strength he exhibited to the last. He was always slow to anger. Independent of the remarkable self-control, which enabled him to preserve a countenance, while Wedderburn was traducing him, as fixed as if it had been carved out of wood, his anger was not kindled quickly, among other reasons because he was too wise and just not to know that, if we could lay aside the sensitiveness of exaggerated self-importance, there would be but little real occasion for anger in the ordinary course of human life. But when meanness, injustice or other aggravated forms of human depravity were to be rebuked, the indignation of Franklin remained deliberate, judicious, calculating and crushing to the last. One illustration of this we have already given in his letter to Captain Peter Landais. Others we shall have brought to our attention in several of his letters to Arthur Lee. Upon these occasions, angry as he was, he was apt to make out his case with very much the same cool completeness as that with which he demonstrated in a letter to the British Post Office that it would be a mistake to shift His Majesty's mails from the Western to the Eastern Post Route in New Jersey. The time never came when he was not fully as militant as the occasion required, though never more so.

And his integrity was as marked as his courage. "Splashes of Dirt thrown upon my Character, I suffered while fresh to remain," he once said. "I did not chuse to spread by endeavouring to remove them, but rely'd on the vulgar Adage *that they would all rub off when they were dry*." And such was his reputation for uprightness that, as a rule,

he could neglect attacks upon his character with impunity. The one vaunt of his life, if such it can be called, was his statement to John Jay that no person could truthfully declare that Benjamin Franklin had wronged him. A statement of that kind, uttered by an even better man than Franklin, might well be answered in the spirit that prompted Henry IV. of France, when his attention was called to a memorial inscription, which asserted that its subject never knew fear, to remark, "Then he never snuffed a candle with his fingers." But that Franklin was a man of sterling probity is unquestionable.[1]

[1] In his *True Benjamin Franklin*, p. 163, Sydney George Fisher makes these statements: "In a letter written to Mrs. Stevenson in London, while he (Franklin) was envoy to France, he expresses surprise that some of the London tradespeople still considered him their debtor for things obtained from them during his residence there some years before, and he asks Mrs. Stevenson, with whom he had lodged, how his account stands with her. . . . He appears to have overdrawn his account with Hall, for there is a manuscript letter in the possession of Mr. Howard Edwards, of Philadelphia, written by Hall, March 1, 1770, urging Franklin to pay nine hundred and ninety-three pounds which had been due for three years." What Franklin's letter to Mrs. Stevenson, which is dated Jan. 25, 1779, states is that he had been told after reaching France that Mr. Henley, the linen-draper, had said that, when the former left England for America, he had gone away in his debt. The letter questions whether Henley ever made such a statement, asks Mrs. Stevenson to let the writer know the meaning of it all, and adds: "I thought he had been fully paid, and still think so, and shall, till I am assur'd of the contrary." The account that the letter asks of Mrs. Stevenson was probably for the shipping charges on the white cloth suit, sword and saddle, which had been forwarded, as the letter shows, to Franklin at Passy by Mrs. Stevenson. Or it may have well been for expense incurred by Mrs. Stevenson in performing some similar office for him. For instance, when he was on the point of leaving England in 1775, he wrote to a friend on the continent that, if he had purchased a certain book for the writer, Mrs. Stevenson, in whose hands he left his little affairs till his return, which he proposed, God willing, in October, would pay the draft for it.

A letter from Franklin to Mrs. Stevenson, dated July 17, 1775, shows that there had been mutual accounts between them during his long and familiar intercourse with her under the Craven Street roof. With this letter, he incloses an order for a sum of money that she had intrusted to him for investment, and also an order for £260 more, "supposing," he says,

"We ought always to do what appears best to be done without much regarding what others may think of it," he wrote to William Carmichael, and, at more than one trying crisis of his career, he rose without difficulty to the requirements of his maxim. Lord North had little love for him, but he is credited with the remarkable statement, during the American War, that, in his belief, Franklin was the only man in France whose hands were not stained with stock jobbery. When the false charge was made that Franklin had never accounted for one of the many millions of livres entrusted to him by our French ally, no pride could suffer more acutely than did his from its inability to disprove the charge immediately. When enemies, to whom he had never given any just cause of offence whatever, were calumniating him towards the close of his life, his desire to leave the reputation of an honest man behind him became the strongest of his motives. The flattering language of great men, he said in his *Journal of the Negotiation for Peace with Great Britain*, did not mean so much to him when he found himself so near the end of life as to esteem lightly all personal interests and concerns except that of maintaining to the last, and leaving behind him the tolerably good character that he had previously supported. Still later he wrote to Henry Laurens, accepting the offer of that true

"by the Sketch Mr. Williams made of our Accts. that I may owe you about that Sum." "When they are finally settled," he further says, "we shall see where the Ballance lies, and easily rectify it." If the account in question had any connection with these accounts the unliquidated nature of the latter, the abruptness with which Franklin was compelled to leave England in 1775, coupled with his expectation of returning, the troubled years which followed and the difficulty of finally settling detailed accounts, when the parties to them are widely separated, furnish a satisfactory explanation of the delay in settlement. If Franklin did not pay a balance claimed from him by Hall on the settlement of their partnership accounts, after the expiration of the partnership in 1766, it was doubtless because of his own copyright counter-claim to which we have already referred in our text.

patriot and gentleman to refute the slanders with regard to his career in France, and saying:

I apprehend that the violent Antipathy of a certain person to me may have produced some Calumnies, which, what you have seen and heard here may enable you easily to refute. You will thereby exceedingly oblige one, who has lived beyond all other Ambition, than that of dying with the fair Character he has long endeavoured to deserve.[1]

[1] In recent years there has been a tendency to disparage the merits of Henry Laurens. The Hales in their *Franklin in France* speak of him "as a very worthy, but apparently very inefficient, member of the Commission." In his admirable prolegomena to the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, which is well calculated to excite the regret that lawyers do not oftener bring the professional habit of weighing evidence to bear upon historical topics, Dr. Francis Wharton says: "The influence he exerted in the formation of the treaty was but slight, and his attitude as to the mode of its negotiation and as to its leading provisions so uncertain as to deprive his course in respect to it of political weight." Dr. Wharton also reaches the conclusion that Henry Laurens was deficient, in critical moments, both in sagacity and resolution. On the other hand Moses Coit Tyler in his *Literary History of the American Revolution* declares that, coming at last upon the arena of national politics, Laurens was soon recognized for what he was, "a trusty, sagacious, lofty, imperturbable character." In another place in the same work, Tyler speaks of the "splendid sincerity, virility, wholesomeness and competence of this man —himself the noblest Roman of them all—the unsurpassed embodiment of the proudest, finest, wittiest, most efficient, and most chivalrous Americanism of his time." And in still another place in the same work the *Narrative of the Capture of Henry Laurens* is described "as a modest and fascinating story of an heroic episode in the history of the Revolution, a fragment of autobiography fit to become a classic in the literature of a people ready to pay homage to whatever is magnanimous, exquisite and indomitable in the manly character." To anyone familiar with the whole conduct of Laurens in the Tower and the other facts upon which Dr. Wharton based his judgment as to his sagacity and firmness at trying conjunctures, these statements of Tyler are to a certain extent mere academic puffery. We see no reason, however, to shade the character that we have ascribed to Laurens in the text. Writing to Franklin about him after his release from the Tower, John Adams said: "I had vast pleasure in his conversation; for I found him possessed of the most exact judgment concerning our enemies, and of the same noble sentiments in all things which I saw in him in Congress." And some eighteen months later Franklin wrote to Laurens himself in terms as strong as that he should ever look on his friendship as an honor to him.

When the negotiations for peace between Great Britain and the United States began, Richard Oswald, the envoy of Lord Shelburne, told Franklin that a part of the confidence felt in him by the English Ministry was inspired by his repute for open, honest dealing. This was not a mere diplomatic *douceur*, but a just recognition of his candid, straightforward conduct in his commerce with men. He was very resourceful and dexterous, if need were, and, in his early life, when he was promoting his own, or the public interests, he exhibited at times a finesse that bordered upon craftiness; but, when Wedderburn taxed him with duplicity, he imputed to Franklin's nature a vice incompatible with his frank, courageous disposition. It was his outspoken sincerity of character that enabled him, during the American War,,to retain the attachment of his English friends even when he was holding up their land as one too wicked for them to dwell in.

His intellectual traits, too, were of a nature to win social fame. In his graphic description of Franklin in extreme old age, Doctor Manasseh Cutler, of Massachusetts, brings him before us with these telling strokes of his pencil:

> I was highly delighted with the extensive knowledge he appeared to have of every subject, the brightness of his memory, and clearness and vivacity of all his mental faculties, notwithstanding his age. His manners are perfectly easy, and everything about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness. He has an incessant vein of humour, accompanied with an uncommon vivacity, which seems as natural and involuntary as his breathing.

In other words, whatever knowledge Franklin had was readily available for social purposes, and suffused with the gaiety and humor which are so ingratiating, when accompanied, as they were in his case, by the desire to please and do good.[1] "He had wit at will," is the testi-

[1] The Abbé Morellet in his Memoirs gives us very much the same impression of the social characteristics of Franklin that Cutler does. "His con-

mony of an unfriendly but honest witness, John Adams. His humor it would be difficult to over-emphasize. It ranged from punning, trifling, smutty jests and horse laughter to the sly, graceful merriment of Addison and the bitter realism of Swift. It irradiated his conversation, his letters, his writings, his passing memoranda, at times even his scientific essays and political papers. "Iron is always sweet, and every way taken is wholesome and friendly to the human Body," he states in his *Account of the New-Invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces;* but his waggish propensity is too much for him, and he adds, "except in Weapons." Jefferson said that Franklin was not allowed to draft the Declaration of Independence for fear that he would insert a joke in it. So far as his humor assumed literary forms, we shall speak of it in another place. We are concerned with it now only so far as it influenced his conversation. In the *Autobiography* he tells us that his reputation among his fellow-printers at Watts's Printing House in London as "a pretty good *riggite*, that is, a jocular verbal satirist," helped to support his consequence in the society. In the same book, he also tells us that later, wishing to break a habit that he was getting

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versation was exquisite—a perfect good nature, a simplicity of manners, an uprightness of mind that made itself felt in the smallest things, an extreme gentleness, and, above all, a sweet serenity that easily became gayety." But this was Franklin when he was certain of his company. "He conversed only with individuals," John Adams tells us, "and freely only with confidential friends. In company he was totally silent." If we may judge by the few specimens reserved by the Diary of Arthur Lee, the Diary of John Baynes, an English barrister, and Hector St. John, the author of *Letters from an American Farmer*, the grave talk of Franklin was as good as his conversation in its livelier moods. After a call with Baynes upon Franklin at Passy, Sir Samuel Romilly wrote in his Journal: "Of all the celebrated persons whom in my life I have chanced to see, Dr. Franklin, both from his appearance and his conversation, seemed to me the most remarkable. His venerable patriarchal appearance, the simplicity of his manner and language, and the novelty of his observations, at least the novelty of them at that time to me, impressed me with an opinion of him as one of the most extraordinary men that ever existed."

into of prattling, punning and joking, which made him acceptable to trifling company only, he gave Silence the second place in his little *Book of Virtues*. "What new story have you lately heard agreeable for telling in conversation?" was one of the standing questions, of his conception, which were to be answered by the members of the Junto at each of its meetings. And, even when he was in his eighty-third year, he could say to Elizabeth Partridge that, notwithstanding the gout, the stone and old age, he enjoyed many comfortable intervals, in which he forgot all his ills, and amused himself in reading or writing, or in conversation with friends, joking, laughing and telling merry stories, as when she first knew him a young man about fifty. His puns at times were as flat as puns usually are, and some of his stories could hardly have prospered in the ear that heard them, if they had not been set off by high animal spirits and contagious good humor. But some of those that crept into his letters, whether original or borrowed, are good enough for repetition. He seems to have had one for every possible combination of circumstances. "The Doctor," Miss Adams observes, "is always silent unless he has some diverting story to tell, of which he has a great collection." The mutinous and quarrelsome temper of his soldiers at Gnadenhutten, when they were idle, put him in mind of the sea-captain, who made it a rule always to keep his men at work, and who exclaimed, upon being told by his mate, that there was nothing more to employ them about, "*Oh, make them scour the anchor.*" His absent-mindedness, when electrocuting a turkey, in setting up an electric circuit through his own body, which cost him the loss of his consciousness, and a numbness in his arms and the back of his neck, which did not wear off until the next morning, put him in mind of the blunderer who, "being about to steal powder, made a hole in the cask with a hot iron." At times, there was a subjective quality

about his stories which lifted them above the level of mere jests. When the suggestion was made that, in view of the favor conferred upon America by the repeal of the Stamp Act by Parliament, America could not, with any face of decency, refuse to defray the expense incurred by Great Britain in stamping so much paper and parchment, Franklin did not lack an apposite story in which a hot iron was again made to figure.

The whole Proceeding [he said] would put one in Mind of the Frenchman that used to accost English and other Strangers on the Pont-Neuf, with many Compliments, and a red hot Iron in his Hand; *Pray Monsieur Anglois*, says he, *Do me the Favour to let me have the Honour of thrusting this hot Iron into your Backside?* Zoons, what does the Fellow mean! Begone with your Iron or I'll break your Head! *Nay Monsieur*, replies he, *if you do not chuse it, I do not insist upon it. But at least, you will in Justice have the Goodness to pay me something for the heating of my Iron.*

This story was too good not to have a sequel.

As you observe [he wrote to his sister Jane] there was no swearing in the story of the poker, when I told it. The late new dresser of it was, probably, the same, or perhaps akin to him, who, in relating a dispute that happened between Queen Anne and the Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning a vacant mitre, which the Queen was for bestowing on a person the Archbishop thought unworthy, made both the Queen and the Archbishop swear three or four thumping oaths in every sentence of the discussion, and the Archbishop at last gained his point. One present at this tale, being surprised, said, "But did the Queen and the Archbishop swear so at one another?" "O no, no," says the relator; "that is only *my way* of telling the story."

Another rather elaborate story was prompted by Franklin's disapproval of the Society of the Cincinnati.

The States [he said in his famous letter to his daughter] should not only restore to them the *Omnia* of their first Motto (omnia reliquit servare rempublicam) which many of them have left and lost, but pay them justly, and reward them generously. They should not be suffered to remain, with (all) their new-created Chivalry, *entirely* in the Situation of the Gentleman in the Story, which their *omnia reliquit* reminds me of. . . . He had built a very fine House, and thereby much impair'd his Fortune. He had a Pride, however, in showing it to his Acquaintance. One of them, after viewing it all, remark'd a Motto over the Door "ŌIA VANITAS." "What," says he, "is the Meaning of this ŌIA? It is a word I don't understand." "I will tell you," said the Gentleman; "I had a mind to have the Motto cut on a Piece of smooth Marble, but there was not room for it between the Ornaments, to be put in Characters large enough to be read. I therefore made use of a Contraction antiently very common in Latin Manuscripts, by which the *m's* and *n's* in Words are omitted, and the Omissions noted by a little Dash above, which you may see there; so that the Word is *omnia*, OMNIA VANITAS." "O," says his Friend, "I now comprehend the Meaning of your motto, it relates to your Edifice; and signifies, that, if you have abridged your *Omnia*, you have, nevertheless, left your VANITAS legible at full length."

The determination of the enemies of America after the Revolution to have it that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, America was going from bad to worse, brought out still another story:

They are angry with us and hate us, and speak all manner of evil of us; but we flourish, notwithstanding [he wrote to his grand-nephew, Jonathan Williams]. They put me in mind of a violent High Church Factor, resident some time in Boston, when I was a Boy. He had bought upon Speculation a Connecticut Cargo of Onions, which he flatter'd himself he might sell again to great Profit, but the Price fell, and they lay upon hand. He was heartily vex'd with his Bargain, especially when he observ'd they began to *grow* in the Store he had

fill'd with them. He show'd them one Day to a Friend. "Here they are," says he, "and they are *growing* too! I damn 'em every day; but I think they are like the Presbyterians; the more I curse 'em, the more they *grow.*"

It was impossible for such an irrational thing as the duel to escape Franklin's humorous insight, and a story like the following tended far more effectively to end the superstition upon which it throve than any pains or penalties that law could devise:

A Man [wrote Franklin from Passy to Thomas Percival] says something, which another tells him is a Lie. They fight; but, whichever is killed, the Point in dispute remains unsettled. To this purpose they have a pleasant little Story here. A Gentleman in a Coffee-house desired another to sit farther from him. "Why so?" "Because, Sir, you stink." "That is an Affront, and you must fight me." "I will fight you, if you insist upon it; but I do not see how that will mend the Matter. For if you kill me, I shall stink too; and if I kill you, (you) will stink, if possible, worse than you do at present."

This is one of those stories which make their own application, but the grave reflections, by which it was followed, are well worthy of quotation too.

How can such miserable Sinners as we are [added Franklin] entertain so much Pride, as to conceit that every Offence against our imagined Honour merits *Death?* These petty Princes in their own Opinion would call that Sovereign a Tyrant, who should put one of them to death for a little uncivil Language, tho' pointed at his sacred Person; yet every one of them makes himself Judge in his own Cause, condemns the offender without a Jury, and undertakes himself to be the Executioner.

Some *bon mots*, too, of Franklin have come down to us with his stories. When a neighbor of his in Philadelphia consulted him as to how he could keep trespassers from coming into his back yard, and stealing small beer from a keg, which he kept there, he replied, "Put a pipe of Madeira

alongside of it." When Lord Stormont, the British Ambassador to France, hatched the report that a large part of Washington's army had surrendered, Franklin was asked whether it was true. "No sir," he said, "it is not a truth, it is only a stormont." The result was that for some time no lies were told in Paris but only "stormonts." It was not often that the wit of Franklin was barbed with malice, but there were good reasons why the malice in this instance should never have cost him any regret. When the American Commissioners proposed an exchange of prisoners to Lord Stormont, he did not deign to reply, but when they followed up their proposition with another letter, he returned a communication to them without date or signature in these insolent words: "The King's Ambassador receives no letters from rebels but when they come to implore his Majesty's mercy." The American Commissioners, with Franklin doubtless as their scrivener, were quite equal to the occasion. "In answer to a letter which concerns some of the most material interests of humanity, and of the two nations, Great Britain and the United States of America, now at war," they retorted, "we received the inclosed *indecent* paper, as coming from your lordship, which we return, for your lordship's more mature consideration." Between Franklin and the vivacity of the Parisians, Lord Stormont found it not a little difficult to maintain his position of frigid and relentless dignity. Commenting in a letter to John Lovell, after Lord Stormont had left France, upon the expense entailed upon the United States by supernumerary commissioners, Franklin takes this parting shot at the Ambassador; we reduce such of his words as were in French to English:

I imagine every one of us spends nearly as much as Lord Stormont did. It is true, he left behind him the character of a niggard; and, when the advertisement appeared for the sale of

his household goods, all Paris laughed at an article of it, perhaps very innocently expressed, "a great quantity of table linen, which has never been used." "That is very true," say they, "for he has never given any one anything to eat."[1]

Another *bon mot* of Franklin was his reply when he was told that Howe had taken Philadelphia. "No," he said, "Philadelphia has taken Howe"; and so it proved. Still another owed its origin to the balloon in its infancy. "Of what use is a balloon?" someone asked in Franklin's presence. "Of what use," he answered, "is a new-born baby?"

But to form a correct impression of Franklin's humor we should think of it, to use Dr. Cutler's comparison, as something as natural to him as the rise and fall of his chest in breathing. It played like an iris over the commonest transactions of his life. If it was only a lost prayer book of his wife that he was advertising for in his *Gazette*, he did it in such terms as these:

Taken out of a Pew in the Church some months since, a Common Prayer-Book, bound in Red, gilt, and letter'd

[1] The lack of generous fare imputed by the Parisians to the table of Lord Stormont was in keeping with the hopelessly rigid and bigoted nature revealed by his dispatches when in France. Writing from Paris on Dec. 11, 1776, to Lord Weymouth, he says of Franklin: "Some people think that either some private dissatisfaction or despair of success have brought him into this country. I can not but suspect that he comes charged with a secret commission from the Congress, and as he is a subtle, artful man, and void of all truth, he will in that case use every means to deceive, will avail himself of the general ignorance of the French, to paint the situation of the rebels in the falsest colours, and hold out every lure to the ministers, to draw them into an open support of that cause. He has the advantage of several intimate connexions here, and stands high in the general opinion. In a word, my Lord, I look upon him as a dangerous engine, and am very sorry that some English frigate did not meet with him by the way." In another letter to Lord Weymouth, dated Apr. 16, 1777, Lord Stormont declared that he was thoroughly convinced that few men had done more than Franklin to poison the minds of the Americans, or were more totally unworthy of his Majesty's mercy.

D. F. on each corner. The Person who took it is desir'd to open it, and read the Eighth Commandment, and afterwards return it to the same Pew again; upon which no further Notice will be taken.

At times, the humor is mere waggishness. When he was the Colonial Deputy Postmaster-General, he indorsed his letters, "Free, B. Franklin," but, after he became the Postmaster-General of the United States, out of deference for the American struggle for liberty, he changed the indorsement to "B. Free Franklin." Even in his brief memoranda on the backs of letters, there are gleams of the same overflowing vivacity. Upon the manuscript of a long poem, received by him, when in France, he jotted down the words: "From M. de Raudiere, a poor Poet, who craves assistance to enable him to finish an epic poem which he is writing against the English. He thinks General Howe will be off as soon as the poem appears." When a Benedictine monk, the prior for a time of the Abbey of St. Pierre de Chalon, lost money at cards, and wrote to him for his aid, he made this endorsement upon the letter: "Dom Bernard, Benedictine, wants me to pay his Gaming Debts—and he will pray for success to our Cause!"

The humor of Franklin was too broad at times not to find expression occasionally in practical jokes. When in England, during his maturer years, he was in the habit of pretending to read his Parable against Persecution, which he had learnt by heart, and in which the manner of the Old Testament is skilfully imitated, out of his Bible, as the fifty-first Chapter of the Book of Genesis. The remarks of the Scripturians on it, he said in a letter written by him a year before his death, were sometimes very diverting. On one occasion, he wrote to the famous English printer, John Baskerville, that, to test the acumen of a connoisseur, who had asserted that Baskerville would blind all the

readers of the nation by the thin and narrow strokes of his letters, he submitted to the inspection of the gentleman, as a specimen of Baskerville's printing, what was in reality a fragment of a page printed by Caslon. Franklin protested that he could not for his life see in what respects the print merited the gentleman's criticism. The gentleman saw in it everywhere illustrations of the justice of this criticism and declared that he could not even then read the specimen without pain in his eyes.

I spared him that Time [said Franklin] the Confusion of being told, that these were the Types he had been reading all his life, with so much Ease to his Eyes; the Types his adored Newton is printed with, on which he has pored not a little; nay, the very Types his own Book is printed with, (for he is himself an Author) and yet never discovered this painful Disproportion in them, till he thought they were yours.[1]

Associated with these moral and intellectual traits was a total lack of all anti-social characteristics or habits. When Franklin was in his twenty-first year, he made this sage entry in his Journal of his voyage from London to Philadelphia:

Man is a sociable being, and it is, for aught I know, one of the worst of punishments to be excluded from Society. I have read abundance of fine things on the subject of solitude, and I know 'tis a common boast in the mouths of those that affect to be thought wise, *that they are never less alone than when alone.* I acknowledge solitude an agreeable refreshment to a busy mind; but were these thinking people obliged to be always alone, I am apt to think they would quickly find their very being insupportable to them.

In his youth he adopted the Socratic method of argument, and grew, he tells us in the *Autobiography*, very

[1] It was Balzac who said that the *canard* was a discovery of Franklin —the inventor of the lightning rod, the hoax, and the republic.

artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither he nor his cause always deserved. But, in a few years, he discovered that these victories were Pyrrhic victories, and he gradually left off this doubtful kind of dialectics, retaining only the habit of expressing himself in terms of modest diffidence, never using when he advanced anything, that might possibly be disputed, the words "certainly," "undoubtedly" or any others that gave the air of positiveness to an opinion, but rather saying "I conceive" or "apprehend" a thing to be so and so; "it appears to me," or "I should think it is so or so" for such and such reasons; or "I imagine it to be so," or "it is so if I am not mistaken."

As the chief ends of conversation [he declared] are to *inform* or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure.

And that Franklin completely succeeded in rooting out the last vestige of dogmatism in his nature we not only have his testimony but that of Jefferson, who was not even born when he resolved to do it. "It was one of the rules which, above all others, made Dr. Franklin the most amiable of men in society," he said, "never to contradict anybody." Long before this, when Franklin was only in his forty-fifth year, James Logan wrote of him to Peter Collinson in these words: "Our Benjamin Franklin is certainly an extraordinary man, one of a singular good judgment, but of equal modesty."

How noble was his capacity for self-effacement in the

investigation of truth we shall see later on. In this place, it is enough to say that even the adulation poured out upon him in France did not in the slightest degree turn his head. He accepted it with the ingenuous pleasure with which he accepted everything that tended to confirm his impression that life was a game fully worth the candle, but, much as he loved France and the French, ready as he was to take a sip of everything that Paris pronounced exquisite, celestial or divine, it is manifest enough that he regarded with no little amusement the effort of French hyperbole to assign to him the rôle of Jupiter Tonans. When Felix Nogaret submitted to him his French version of Turgot's epigram, "Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis," Franklin, after acknowledging the flood of compliments that he could never hope to merit, with which the writer had overwhelmed him in his letter, added, "I will only call your attention to two inaccuracies in the original line. In spite of my electrical experiments, the lightning descends just the same before my very nose and beard, and, as to tyrants, there have been more than a million of us engaged in snatching his sceptre from him." His pen, however, was wasting its breath when it attempted to convince a Frenchman of that day that his countrymen did not owe their liberties solely to him. If the French had not been too generous and well-bred to remind him of the millions of livres obtained by him from the French King for the support of the American cause, he might have found it more difficult to deny that he was the real captor of Cornwallis.

How heartily Franklin hated disputation we have already had some occasion to see. This aversion is repeatedly expressed in the *Autobiography*. Referring to his arguments with Collins, he tells us in one place that the disputatious turn of mind

> is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is

necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, is productive of disgusts and perhaps enmities where you may have occasion for friendship.

In another place, he has this to say of the contentious Governor Morris, one of the Colonial governors of Pennsylvania:

He had some reason for loving to dispute, being eloquent, an acute sophister, and, therefore, generally successful in argumentative conversation. He had been brought up to it from a boy, his father, as I have heard, accustoming his children to dispute with one another for his diversion, while sitting at table after dinner; but I think the practice was not wise; for, in the course of my observation, these disputing, contradicting, and confuting people are generally unfortunate in their affairs. They get victory sometimes, but they never get good will, which would be of more use to them.

The same thought is stated in a letter from Franklin to Robert Morris in which the former told the latter that he would see, on comparing a letter which Franklin had written, with the answer, that, if he had replied, which he could easily have done, a dispute might have arisen out of it, in which, if he had got the better, he should perhaps have got nothing else.

Facetious and agreeable as he was, he was likewise free from the unsocial habit of monopolizing conversation:

The great secret of succeeding in conversation, [he declared], is to admire little, to hear much; always to distrust our own reason, and sometimes that of our friends; never to pretend to wit, but to make that of others appear as much as possibly we can; to hearken to what is said, and to answer to the purpose.

Nor, in making or borrowing these just observations, was Franklin like Carlyle who has been wittily said to

have preached the doctrine of silence in thirty volumes. What he preached in these respects, he practised.

He was friendly and agreeable in conversation [Miss Logan tells us], which he suited to his company, appearing to wish to benefit his hearers. I could readily believe that he heard nothing of consequence himself but what he turned to the account he desired, and in his turn profited by the conversation of others.

It is hardly just to Franklin, however, to portray his social character negatively. The truth is, as the extracts from his correspondence have clearly enough shown, he was one of the most companionable and one of the kindest and most sympathetic and affectionate of human beings. He detested wrangling and discord. He had no patience with malice, and refused to allow the *Pennsylvania Gazette* to be made a vehicle for detraction. To tell a chronic grumbler that he was hurt by his "voluminous complaints," or to write to a friend that he would have sent him a longer letter but for the coming in of a *bavard* who had worried him till evening was about as close as he ever got to fretfulness. There is testimony to the effect that he never uttered a hasty or angry word to any member of his household, servant or otherwise. Even where he had strong reasons for resentment, he was remarkably just, generous and forgiving. Speaking in the *Autobiography* of the manner in which he had been deceived by Governor Keith, he had only these mild words of reproof for him:

He wish'd to please everybody; and, having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious, sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good governor for the people, tho' not for his constituents, the proprietaries, whose instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best laws were of his planning and passed during his administration.

When Bradford was Postmaster, he refused to allow his post-riders to carry any newspaper but his own. When the tables were turned, and Franklin was in the position as Postmaster himself to shut out every publication from the mails except his *Gazette*, he declined to retaliate on Bradford's meanness. Drained of money, as he was by Ralph, when they were in London together, he nevertheless summed up the situation in the *Autobiography* with the charitable statement: "I lov'd him, notwithstanding, for he had many amiable qualities." If there was any person for whom Franklin entertained, and had just cause to entertain, a bitter feeling of contempt and dislike, it was Thomas Penn. Yet, when Lady Penn solicited his assistance, for the protection of her interests in Pennsylvania, after the Proprietary Government in that Province had collapsed with the royal authority, he did all that he could properly do to aid her.

He was always ready for a friendly game of cribbage, cards or chess. Though entirely too temperate to indulge any physical appetite to excess, he was not insensible to the pleasures of the table in his later years. Wine, too, he relished sufficiently to thank God for it liturgically in his youth, and to consume a second bottle of it at times in middle age with the aid of his friend "Straney." When Col. Henry Bouquet was looking forward to a hot summer in Charleston, he wrote to him that he did all that he could for his relief, by recommending him to an ingenious physician of his acquaintance, who knew the rule of making cool, weak, refreshing punch, not inferior to the nectar of the gods. It would not do, of course, to accept too literally the song in which Franklin exalted Bacchus at the expense of Venus, or the Anacreontic letter to the Abbé Morellet, in which wine was extolled as if it were all milk of our Blessed Lady. But these convivial effusions of his pen nevertheless assist us in arriving at a correct interpretation of his character.

He was fond of music also, and was something of a musician himself. He could play on the harp, the guitar and the violin, and he improved the armonica, which acquired some temporary repute. His interest in this musical instrument owed its birth to the melodious sounds which a member of the Royal Society, Mr. Delaval, happened to produce in his presence by rubbing his fingers on the edges of bowls, attuned to the proper notes by the different measures of water that they contained. It was upon the armonica that Franklin played at the social gatherings under M. Brillon's roof which he called his Opera, and to which such lively references are made in the letters that passed between Madame Brillon and himself. The advantages of the instrument, he wrote to Giambatista Beccaria, were that its tones were incomparably sweet beyond those of any other; that they could be swelled and softened at pleasure by stronger or weaker pressures of the fingers, and continued to any length; and that the instrument, being once well tuned, never again required tuning.

Blend with all this the happy disposition, which led Franklin to declare in his eighty-second year that he comforted himself with the reflection that only three incurable diseases, the gout, the stone, and old age, had fallen to his share, and that they had not yet deprived him of his natural cheerfulness, his delight in books, and enjoyment of social conversation, and we can form some adequate idea of what he brought to intercourse with his fellow-creatures. Only about two weeks before his death he wrote to Jane Mecom from his death-bed:

> I do not repine at my malady, though a severe one, when I consider how well I am provided with every convenience to palliate it, and to make me comfortable under it; and how many more horrible evils the human body is subject to; and what a long life of health I have been blessed with, free from them all.

In his *Proposals Relating to Education*, he dwelt upon the importance of "that *Benignity of Mind*, which shows itself in *searching for* and *seizing* every Opportunity *to serve* and *to oblige;* and is the Foundation of what is called Good Breeding; highly useful to the Possessor, and most agreeable to all." This benignity of mind belonged to him in an eminent degree. The grape vines that he procured for his friend Quincy at the cost of so much trouble to himself were but one of the ten thousand proofs that he gave his friends of his undiminished affection and unselfish readiness to serve them. Throughout his whole life, he had a way of keeping friendship fresh by some thoughtful gift or act of kindness. Books, pamphlets, writing materials, seeds of many descriptions, candles, hams, American nuts and dried apples, even choice soap, were among the articles with which he reminded his friends that he had not forgotten them.

The Box not being full [he wrote to Collinson], I have put in a few more of our Candles which I recommend for your particular Use when you have Occasion to read or write by Night; they give a whiter Flame than that of any other kind of Candle, and the Light is more like Daylight than any other Light I know; besides they need little or no Snuffing, and grease nothing. There is still a little Vacancy at the End of the Box, so I'll put in a few Cakes of American Soap made of Myrtle Wax, said to be the best Soap in the World for Shaving or Washing fine Linnens etc. Mrs. Franklin requests your Daughter would be so good as to accept 3 or 4 Cakes of it, to wash your Grandson's finest Things with.

In a letter to Bartram, who had informed him that his eye sight was failing, Franklin surmises that this good and dear old friend did not have spectacles that suited him.

Therefore [he said] I send you a complete set, from number one to thirteen, that you may try them at your ease; and, having pitched on such as suit you best at present, reserve those of

higher numbers for future use, as your eyes grow still older; and with the lower numbers, which are for younger people, you may oblige some other friends. My love to good Mrs. Bartram and your children.

Afterwards, he sends to Bartram several sorts of seed and the English medal which had been awarded to him for his botanical achievements. And with them went also one of the compliments in which his urbanity abounded. Alluding to the medal, he says, "It goes in a Box to my Son Bache, with the Seeds. I wish you Joy of it. Notwithstanding the Failure of your Eyes, you write as distinctly as ever."

"Please to accept a little Present of Books, I send by him, curious for the Beauty of the Impression," he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan, when Temple was on the point of visiting England. One of his last gifts was a collection of books to Abdiel Holmes, the father of Oliver Wendell Holmes. In addition to the gifts that he made to his friends, and the numerous commissions that he executed for them, when he was in London, he was prompt to let them feel that they could always be certain of his sympathy in every respect that affected their prosperity or happiness for good or for evil. In one of his letters, he assures Jared Eliot that, if he should send any of his steel saws to Philadelphia for sale, the writer would not be wanting, where his recommendation might be of service. When at Passy, he wrote to George Whatley for a copy of his "excellent little Work," *The Principles of Trade.* "I would get it translated and printed here," he said. The same generous impulse led him to write to Robert Morris, when Morris was acquiring his reputation as "The Financier," "No one but yourself can enjoy your growing reputation more than I do." Often as he was honored both at home and abroad by institutions of learning, it is safe to say that no honor that he ever received afforded

him more pleasure than he experienced when the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred at his instance by the University of Edinburgh upon Dr. Samuel Cooper.

In no respect, however, did Franklin commend himself more signally to the affection of his friends than in the notice that he took of their children. His relations to some of these children were closely akin to those of adoption. To John Hughes, Josiah Quincy, Henry Laurens and de Chaumont, he wrote at one time or another referring to their "valuable" sons, and filling their bosoms with the parental joy that his commendation could not fail to excite.

In these attributes of mind, character and nature can readily be found, we think, the explanation of that capacity for winning and retaining friends which made the life of Franklin as mellow as a ripe peach. The most important of them in a social sense lead us, of course, simply to the statement that he was far more beloved than most men are because he was himself influenced far more than most men are by the spirit of love. His sympathy and affection were given to men in gross, and they were given to men in detail. His heart was capacious enough to take in the largest enterprises of human benevolence, but, unlike the hearts of many philanthropists and reformers, it was not so intensely preoccupied with them as to have no place for

> That best portion of a good man's life,—
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of Kindness and of Love.

CHAPTER II

Franklin as a Man of Business

WHEN some one said to Erskine that punning was the lowest kind of wit, he replied that the statement was true, because punning was the foundation of all wit.

The business career of Franklin did not move upon such an exalted plane as his scientific or political career, but it was the basis on which the entire superstructure of his renown as a philosopher and a statesman was built up; inasmuch as it was his early release from pecuniary cares which enabled him to apply himself with single-minded devotion to electrical experiments, and to accept at the hands of the people of Pennsylvania the missions to England which opened up the wider horizon of his post-meridian life. Quite apart, however, from the scientific and political reputation, to which his material success smoothed the way, his business career has an intrinsic interest of its own. In itself alone, when the limited opportunities afforded by Colonial conditions for the accumulation of a fortune are considered, it is a remarkable illustration of the extent to which sleepless energy and wise conduct rise superior to the most discouraging circumstances. Comparatively few young men aspire to be philosophers or statesmen, but almost every young man of merit finds himself under the necessity of striving for a pecuniary independence or at any rate for a pecuniary

livelihood. How this object can be most effectually accomplished, is the problem, above all others in the world, the most importunate; and the effort to solve it from generation to generation is one of the things that invest human existence with perpetual freshness. To a young man, involved in the hopes and anxieties of his first struggles for a foothold in the world, the history of Franklin, as a business man, could not but be full of inspiration, even if it had not flowered into higher forms of achievement, and were not reflected in publications of rare literary value. But, putting altogether out of sight the great fame acquired by Franklin in scientific and political fields, a peculiar vividness is imparted to his business career by other circumstances which should not be overlooked. His main calling was that of a printer, a vocation of unusual importance and influence in a free community. "I, Benjamin Franklin, of Philadelphia, printer, late Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America to the Court of France, now President of the State of Pennsylvania," is the way in which he describes himself in his will executed less than two years before his death. And from that day to this, upon one memorable occasion or another, guilds of printers on both sides of the Atlantic have acclaimed him as little less than the patron saint of their craft.

Two of his commercial enterprises were the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the most readable newspaper of Colonial America, and *Poor Richard's Almanac*, the only almanac that has ever attained the rank of literature. And finally the story of Franklin's business vicissitudes and the fortune, that he ultimately won, has been pictured with incomparable distinctness in the fascinating *Autobiography*. There he has set forth, as no other man with such lowly beginnings has had the genius to set forth, the slow, painful progress of a printer and merchant, under harsh and rigid conditions, from poverty to wealth.

That fortune cannot be won under such circumstances except by the exercise of untiring industry, pinching frugality and unceasing vigilance, but that, with good health, good character, unquailing courage and due regard to Father Abraham's harangue, every man can conquer adversity, is the moral which the *Autobiography* has for the youth who has no inheritance but his own hands or brain. It is sad to reflect how much more impressive and stimulating this moral would be, if the *Autobiography* did not also disagreeably remind us that pecuniary ideals subject human character to many peculiar temptations of their own, and that, as the result of the destructive competition, which extends even to the sapling struggling in the thick set copse for its share of light and air, the success of one man in business is too often founded upon the ruins of that of another.

The business life of Franklin began when he was ten years old. At that age, he was taken from Mr. Brownell's school in Boston, and set to the task at the Blue Ball, his father's shop, of "cutting wick for the candles, filling the dipping mold and the molds for cast candles, attending the shop, going of errands, etc." At this he continued until he was twelve years of age, but his duties were so distasteful to him that his father feared that, unless he could find some more congenial occupation for him, he would run off to sea. To avert this danger, Josiah sometimes took Benjamin about with him, and showed him joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers and other artisans at their several trades in the hope of awakening an inclination in him for one of them. The walks were not unprofitable to the son.

It has ever since [he says in the *Autobiography*] been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools; and it has been useful to me, having learnt so much by it as to be able to do little jobs myself in my house when a workman could not readily be got, and to construct little machines for my

experiments, while the intention of making the experiment was fresh and warm in my mind.

After this circuit of the various handicrafts, Josiah decided to make a cutler of Benjamin, and he placed him on probation with Samuel Franklin, a cutler, and a son of Josiah's brother, Benjamin. But Samuel thought that he should be paid a fee for instructing his cousin, and the suggestion was so displeasing to Josiah that he took the lad back to his own home. He doubtless felt that Samuel might have remembered whose roof it was that had sheltered his father when the latter first came over from England to Boston.

The real inclination, however, that Benjamin discovered at this period of his life was for books. His father observed it, and decided to make a printer of him, and it was when James, an older son of Josiah, returned from England, with a press and letters, to set up as a printer at Boston, that Benjamin was finally persuaded to enter into indentures of apprenticeship with him. He did not yield at once, because, while he preferred the business of a printer to that of a tallow chandler, the salt of the sea was still in his blood. Under the provisions of the indentures, he was to serve as his brother's apprentice, until he was twenty-one years of age, but he was to be allowed the wages of a journeyman during the last year of the apprenticeship. It was a fortunate thing for the apprentice that he should have become bound to a master, who had been trained for his craft in London, and the extraordinary skill which he early acquired as a printer was probably due in part to this circumstance. Among the publications printed by James, while the apprenticeship lasted, were Stoddard's *Treatise on Conversion*, Stone's *Short Catechism* and *A Prefatory Letter about Psalmody*. These publications were all of the kind that Franklin afterwards came to regard as hopelessly dry pemmican. Other publications, printed by

James Franklin, during the same time, were various New England sermons, *The Isle of Man, or Legal Proceedings in Manshire against Sin*, an allegory, *A Letter from One in the Country to his Friend in Boston*, *News from the Moon*, *A Friendly Check from a kind Relation to the Chief Cannoneer* and *A Word of Comfort to a Melancholy Country* —all political pamphlets,—several papers on inoculation, and a production bearing the quaint title *Hooped Petticoats Arraigned by the Light of Nature and the Law of God.* But it was through a publication of a very different nature from these that James Franklin has come to occupy his position of prominence in the life of his apprentice. This publication was the *New England Courant*, already mentioned above. Its first issue appeared at Boston on August 21, 1721, and so bold were its pungent comments upon the clergy and magistrates of the Colony that, within a year, James Franklin was by the Council summoned before it for what it conceived to be highly injurious reflections upon the civil authorities. The reflections consisted in this: A letter from Newport in the *Courant* for June 11, 1722, stated that a piratical vessel had been seen off Block Island, and that two vessels were being fitted out to pursue her. "We are advised from Boston," was the conclusion of the letter, "that the Government of the Massachusetts are fitting out a ship (The Flying Horse) to go after the pirates, to be commanded by Captain Peter Papillon, and 'tis thought he will sail some time this month, wind and weather permitting." The letter, of course, was fictitious, and but a mild piece of satire in comparison with some of the prior utterances of the *Courant*. But this time the magistracy of the Colony was too much exasperated by the past misdemeanors of the *Courant* to overlook such a gibe at the expense of its activity. When questioned by the Council, James admitted that he was the owner of the paper, but refused to disclose the name of the author of the offensive letter.

Benjamin was questioned, too, and united in the refusal. This was excusable in him as it was a point of honor for an apprentice not to betray his master's secrets, but James had no such plea behind which to shelter himself. Indeed, his bearing before the Council appears to have been too haughty to warrant the idea that he was much concerned about bringing forward any sort of defence. The examination resulted in a decision by the Council that the letter was "a high affront to the Government" and an order to the Sheriff to commit James to the Boston Jail.

A week in jail was sufficient to bring James a whining suppliant to the feet of his oppressors. At the end of that time, he addressed an humble petition to the Council, acknowledging his folly in affronting the civil government, and his indecent behavior, when arraigned for it, and praying for forgiveness and less rigorous confinement. The petition was granted, but, when he was released, he had been a whole month in durance. In the meantime, however, Benjamin, who had attracted the attention of his brother and the group of writers, who contributed to the columns of the *Courant*, by a sprightly series of letters signed Silence Dogood, of which we shall say something hereafter, had been conducting the publication, and, with the aid of his literary coadjutors, assailing the proceedings of the Council in prose and verse. These attacks continued for six months after James was released, and were borne by the Council with a supineness which was probably due to the fear of exciting popular sympathy with the *Courant* as a champion of free speech. But in the issue of the *Courant* for January 14, 1723, appeared an article so caustic that the Council could contain itself no longer. It was headed by the well known lines of *Hudibras*, which are significant of the spirit in which the youthful Franklin confronted the whole system of Puritan Asceticism:

> In the wicked there's no vice,
> Of which the saints have not a spice;

And yet that thing that's pious in
The one, in t'other is a sin.
Is't not ridiculous and nonsense,
A saint should be a slave to conscience?

The performance has so many earmarks of Franklin's peculiar modes of thought and speech that it is hard not to ascribe its authorship to him without hesitation. Besides thrusts at the Governor and other public functionaries, it lashed the pietists of the place and time with unsparing severity. Many persons, it declared, who seemed to be more than "ordinarily religious," were often found to be the greatest cheats imaginable. They would dissemble and lie, snuffle and whiffle, and, if it were possible, would overreach and defraud all who dealt with them.

For my own part [the writer further declared] when I find a man full of religious cant and pellavar, I presently suspect him to be a knave. Religion is, indeed, the *principal thing;* but too much of it is worse than none at all. The world abounds with knaves and villains; but of all knaves, the *religious knave* is the worst; and villainies acted under the cloak of religion are the most execrable. Moral honesty, though it will not of itself, carry a man to heaven, yet I am sure there is no going thither *without it.* And however such men, of whom I have been speaking, may palliate their wickedness, they will find that *publicans and harlots will enter the kingdom of heaven before themselves.*

The same day, on which this issue of the *Courant* appeared, the Council passed an order, denouncing it in scathing terms, and appointing a committee of three persons to consider and report what was proper for the Court to do with regard to it. It did not take the committee long to report. They condemned the *Courant* in stern language as an offence to church and state, and "for precaution of the like offence for the future," humbly

proposed that "James Franklin, the printer and publisher thereof, be strictly forbidden by this Court to print or publish the New England *Courant*, or any other pamphlet or paper of the like nature, except it be first supervised by the Secretary of this Province." The report was approved, and followed by an order, carrying its recommendations into execution. But the proprietor of the *Courant* and his literary retainers were equal to the crisis. They assembled at once, and resolved that the paper should thenceforth be issued in the name of Benjamin, at that time a boy of seventeen. At the same time, to retain his hold on his apprentice until the expiration of his term, James resorted to a knavish expedient.

> The contrivance [the *Autobiography* tells us] was that my old indenture should be return'd to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to be shown on occasion, but to secure to him the benefit of my service, I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme it was; however, it was immediately executed.

As the final step in the fraud, the next issue of the *Courant* announced that the late publisher of the paper, finding that so many inconveniences would arise by his taking the manuscripts and public news to be supervised by the Secretary as to render his carrying it on unprofitable, had entirely dropped the undertaking. The *Courant* itself, however, went merrily along in its old evil courses, despite the fact that the same issue, speaking through its new management, as if it were an entire stranger to its guilty past, deprecated newspaper license in the strongest terms, looked forward to a future of genial good-humor only, and even gave expression to such a deceitful sentiment as this: "Pieces of pleasancy and mirth have a secret charm in them to allay the heats and tumors of our spirits, and to make a man forget his restless resentments." These

debonair presences were hardly entered before they were laid aside and the attacks on the clergy and their sanctimonious adherents renewed with as much wit and vivacity as formerly, if not more; and so eagerly read were the lampoons of the *Courant* by the population of Boston, which, perhaps, after all, stiff-necked as it was, did not differ from most urban populations in containing more sinners than saints, that, under the management of "Old James," the mask behind which young Franklin concealed his features, the *Courant* was in a few months able to raise its price from ten to twelve shillings a year. It was a lawless sheet, but in its contest against arbitrary power and muffled speech, it was swimming with a current that was to gather up additional elements of irresistible volume and force at every stage of its journey towards the open main of present American political ideas.

In the management of the *Courant*, Franklin had scored his first business success. James might well have made his gifted apprentice his co-partner, but, whether from jealousy, the sanctimony of the apprentice, mere choler or the domineering temper that we should naturally expect in a man who meekly kissed the hand of tyranny after a single week in jail, he was far from doing anything of the sort. Smarting under the snubs and blows administered to him by a brother, from whose fraternal relationship to him he thought that he was entitled to receive somewhat more than the ordinary indulgence shown an apprentice, Benjamin, to use his own words, took upon him to assert his freedom, presuming that James would not venture to produce the new indentures. When James found that his apprentice was about to leave him, he prevented him from securing employment with any other Boston printer by warning them all against him. The consequence was that the boy, between his reputation as "a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satyr," the horror with which he was pointed at by good

people as an infidel or atheist, the lowering eye of the Provincial Government, and the rancor with which he was pursued by his brother, found himself under a cloud of opprobrium from which he could not escape except by making his home in another place than Boston. Knowing that his father would detain him, if he learnt that he was about to go elsewhere, he sold enough of his books to obtain a small sum of money for his journey, and contrived, through the management of Collins, to be secretly taken on board of a sloop on the eve of sailing for New York, under the pretence of his being a young acquaintance of Collins, who had got a naughty girl with child. The flight which followed has been narrated and pictured until it is almost as well known as the exodus of the Old Testament. He would be a rash writer, indeed, who imagined that he could tell that story over again in any words except those of Franklin himself without dispelling a charm as subtle as that which forbids a seashell to be removed from the seashore. How, with a fair wind, he found himself, a boy of seventeen, in New York,[1] without a claim of friendship, acquaintance or recommendation upon a human being in that town; how he fruitlessly applied for employment to the only printer there, William Bradford, and was advised by him to go on to Philadelphia; how, owing to an ugly squall, he was thirty hours on the waters of New York Bay before he could make the Kill, without victuals, or any drink except a bottle of filthy rum, and with no companion except his boatman and a drunken Dutchman; how after breaking up a fever, brought on by this experience, with copious draughts of cold water, he trudged on foot all the way across New Jersey from Amboy to Burlington; stopping the first day for the night at a poor inn, where travel-stained and drenched to the skin by rain, he was in danger of being

[1] In 1723 the town of New York had a population of seven or eight thousand persons.

taken up as a runaway servant; stopping the second day at an inn within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by a Dr. Brown, an infidel vagabond, with a flavor of letters, and arriving the next morning at Burlington, where a kindly old woman of whom he had bought gingerbread, to eat on his way down the Delaware, gave him a dinner of ox cheek with great good will, and accepted only a pot of ale in return—all these things are told in the *Autobiography* in words as well known to the ordinary American boy as the prominent incidents of his own life. And so also is the descent of the Delaware in the timely boat that hove in sight as Benjamin was walking in the evening by the water-side at Burlington on the day of his arrival there, and took him aboard, putting in about midnight at Cooper's Creek for fear that it had passed in the darkness the town which has since grown to be a vast city more luminous at night than the heavens above it, and landing at Market Street, Philadelphia, the next day, Sunday, at eight or nine o'clock. Here the dirty, hungry wayfarer found himself in a land marked by many surprising contrasts with the one from which he had fled. There was no biscuit to be had in the town, nor could he even obtain a three-penny loaf at the baker shop on Second Street; but for three pence he purchased to his astonishment three great puffy rolls, so large that, after sating his hunger with one of them, as he walked up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, and then back by other streets for a drink of river-water to the Market Street Wharf, he still had the other two left to give to a mother and child, who had come down the Delaware with him, and were on their way to a more distant point. But, doubtless, of all the things in that unfamiliar place, the one that seemed to him most unlike his former home was the serene, mild face that religion wore. It must have been like mollifying oil poured into a wound for him to find himself in such an edifice as the Great Quaker meeting house near the

market with a placid, clean-dressed concourse of worshippers, whose brooding silence, so unlike the strident voices of the Saints, with whom he had been warring in Boston, soon lulled him to sleep; a sleep not so deep or so long, however, that the youth, exhausted by the labor of rowing, and the want of rest, could not, when diverted from the sign of the disreputable Three Mariners, and directed to the sign of the more reputable Crooked Billet, in Water Street, by a friendly Quaker guide, consume in profound slumber, with a brief intermission for supper, the entire time between dinner and the next morning. He was too young yet to need to be reminded by any Poor Richard that there is sleeping enough in the grave, and the next morning was to see the beginning of a struggle, first for subsistence, and then for a fortune, hard as a muscle tense with the utmost strain that it can bear.

With the return of day, he made himself as tidy as he could without the aid of his clothes chest, which was coming around by sea, and repaired to the printing shop of Andrew Bradford, to whom he had been referred by William Bradford, the father of Andrew, in New York. When he arrived at the shop, he found the father there. By travelling on horseback, he had reached Philadelphia before Benjamin. By him Benjamin was introduced to Andrew Bradford, who received him civilly, and gave him breakfast but told him that he was not at present in need of a hand, having recently secured one. There was another printer in town, however, he said, lately set up, one Keimer, who perhaps might employ him. If not, Benjamin was welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give him a little work to do now and then until he could find steadier employment for him.

Benjamin then went off to see Keimer; and William Bradford accompanied him; for what purpose soon became apparent enough. "Neighbor," said Bradford, "I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps

you may want such a one." Keimer asked Benjamin a few questions, put a composing stick in his hands to test his competency, and declared that he would employ him soon though he had just then nothing for him to do. Then taking old Bradford, whom he had never seen before, and whose relationship to Andrew he never suspected, to be a friendly fellow townsman, he opened up his plans and prospects to his visitors, and announced that he expected to get the greater part of the printing business in Philadelphia into his hands. This announcement prompted William Bradford to draw him on "by artful questions, and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what interest he reli'd on, and in what manner he intended to proceed." "I," observes Franklin, "who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old sophister, and the other a mere novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surpris'd when I told him who the old man was."

There was room enough in Philadelphia for such an expert craftsman as Benjamin. Andrew Bradford had not been bred to the business of printing, and was very illiterate, and Keimer, though something of a scholar, was a mere compositor, and knew nothing of presswork. His printing outfit consisted of an old shattered press, and one small, worn-out font of English letters. When Benjamin called on him, he was composing directly out of his head an elegy on Aquila Rose, a worthy young Philadelphian who had just died:

> What mournful accents thus accost mine ear,
> What doleful echoes hourly thus appear!
> What sighs from melting hearts proclaim aloud
> The solemn mourning of this numerous crowd.
> In sable characters the news is read,
> Our Rose is withered, and our Eagle's fled,
> In that our dear Aquila Rose is dead.

These are a few of the many lines in which Keimer, disdaining ink-bottle and quill, traced with his composing stick alone from birth to death the life of his lost Lycidas. As there was no copy, and but one pair of cases, and the threnody was likely to require all the letters that Keimer had, no helper could be of any assistance to him. So Benjamin put the old press into as good a condition as he could, and, promising Keimer to come back and print off the elegy, as soon as it was transcribed into type from the tablets of his brain, returned to Bradford's printing-house. Here he was given a small task, and was lodged and boarded until Keimer sent for him to strike off his poem. While he had been away, Keimer had procured another pair of cases, and had been employed to reprint a pamphlet; and upon this pamphlet Benjamin was put to work.

During the period of his employment by Keimer, an incident arose which gave a decisive turn to his fortunes for a time. Happening to be at New Castle, his brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, the master of a sloop that plied between Boston and the Delaware River, heard that he was at Philadelphia, and wrote to him, earnestly urging him to return to Boston. To this letter Benjamin replied, thanking Holmes for his advice, but stating his reasons for leaving Boston fully and in such a way as to convince him that the flight from Boston was not so censurable as he supposed. The letter was shown by Holmes to Sir William Keith, who read it, and was surprised when he was told the age of the writer. Benjamin, he said, appeared to be a young man of promising parts, and should, therefore, be encouraged, for the printers at Philadelphia were wretched ones, and he did not doubt that, if Benjamin would set up as a printer there, he would succeed. As to himself, he would procure him the public printing and render him any other service in his power. Before these circumstances were brought to the knowledge of

Benjamin, the Governor and Col. French of New Castle proceeded to look him up, and one day, while he and Keimer were working together near the window of the Keimer printing-office, they saw the pair coming across the street in their fine clothes towards its door. As soon as they were heard at the door, Keimer, assuming that they were calling upon him, ran down to greet them, but the Governor inquired for Benjamin, walked upstairs, and, with a condescension and politeness to which the youth was quite unaccustomed, paid him many compliments, expressed a desire to be acquainted with him, blamed him kindly for not making himself known to him, when Benjamin first came to Philadelphia, and invited him to accompany him to the tavern where he was going, he said, with Col. French to taste some excellent Madeira.

"I," says Franklin, "was not a little surprised, and Keimer star'd like a pig poison'd." But the invitation was accepted, and, at a tavern, at the corner of Third Street, and over the Madeira, Keith suggested that the youth should become a printer on his own account, and pointed out to him the likelihood of his success; and both he and Col. French assured him that he would have their interest and influence for the purpose of securing the public printing in Pennsylvania and the three Lower Counties on the Delaware. When Benjamin stated that he doubted whether his father would assist him in the venture, Keith replied that he would give him a letter to Josiah, presenting the advantages of the scheme, and that he did not doubt that it would be effectual. The result of the conversation was a secret understanding that Benjamin should return to Boston in the first available vessel with Keith's letter, and, while he was awaiting this vessel, Benjamin continued at work with Keimer as usual; Keith sending for him now and then to dine with him, and conversing with him in the most affable, familiar and friendly manner imaginable.

Later a little vessel came along bound for Boston. With Keith's letter in his possession, Benjamin took passage in her, and, after a dangerous voyage of two weeks, found himself again in the city from which he had fled seven months before. All the members of his family gave him a hearty welcome except his brother James, but Josiah, after reading the Governor's letter, and considering its contents for some days, expressed the opinion that he must be a man of small discretion to think of setting up a boy in business who wanted yet three years of being at man's estate. He flatly refused to give his consent to the project, but wrote a civil letter to the Governor, thanking him for the patronage that he had proffered Benjamin, and stating his belief that his son was too young for such an enterprise. Nevertheless, Josiah was pleased with the evidences of material success and standing that his son had brought back with him from Philadelphia, and, when Benjamin left Boston on his return to Philadelphia, it was with the approbation and blessing of his parents, and some tokens, in the form of little gifts, of their love, and with the promise, moreover, of help from Josiah, in case he should not, by the time he reached the age of twenty-one, save enough money by his industry and frugality to establish himself in business.

When Benjamin arrived at Philadelphia, and communicated Josiah's decision to Keith, the Governor was not in the least disconcerted. There was a great difference in persons he was so kind as to declare. Discretion did not always accompany years, nor was youth always without it. "And since he will not set you up," he said to Benjamin, "I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolv'd to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed." This, the *Autobiography* tells us, was uttered with such apparently heartfelt cordiality that Benjamin

did not entertain the slightest doubt of Keith's sincerity, and, as he had kept, and was still keeping, his plans entirely secret, there was no one more familiar with Keith's character than himself to warn him that the actual value of Keith's promises was a very different thing from their face value. Believing the Governor to be one of the best men in the world to have thus unsolicited made such a generous offer to him, Benjamin drew up an inventory calling for a small printing outfit of the value of about one hundred pounds sterling, and handed it to him. It met with his approval, but led him to ask whether it might not be of some advantage for Benjamin to be on the spot in England to choose the type, and to see that everything was good of its kind. Moreover, he suggested that, when Benjamin was there, he might make some useful acquaintance, and establish a profitable correspondence with book-sellers and stationers. To the advantage of all this Benjamin could not but assent. "Then," said Keith, "get yourself ready to go with Annis"; meaning the master of the *London Hope*, the annual ship, which was the only one at that time plying regularly between London and Philadelphia.

Until Annis sailed, Benjamin continued in the employment of Keimer, whom he still kept entirely in ignorance of his project, and was frequently at the home of Keith. During this time, Keith's intention of establishing him in business was always mentioned as a fixed thing, and it was understood that he was to take with him letters of recommendation from Keith to a number of the latter's friends in England besides a letter of credit from Keith to supply him with the necessary money for buying the printing outfit and the necessary printer's supplies. Before Annis' ship sailed, Benjamin repeatedly called upon Keith for these letters at different times appointed by him, but on each occasion their delivery was postponed to a subsequent date. Thus things went on until the ship was actually on

the point of sailing. Then, when Benjamin called on Keith, to take his leave of him and to receive the letters, the Governor's secretary, Dr. Bard, came out from Keith and told him that the Governor was busily engaged in writing, but would be at New Castle before the ship, and that there the letters would be delivered. Upon the arrival of the ship at New Castle, Keith, true to his word, was awaiting it, but, when Benjamin went to Keith's lodgings to get the letters, the Governor's secretary again came out from him with a statement by him that he was then absorbed in business of the utmost importance, but that he would send the letters aboard. The message was couched in highly civil terms, and was accompanied by hearty wishes that Benjamin might have a good voyage, and speedily be back again. "I returned on board," says Franklin in the *Autobiography*, "a little puzzled, but still not doubting." At the very beginning of the voyage, Benjamin and his graceless friend Ralph had an unusual stroke of good luck. Andrew Hamilton, a famous lawyer of Philadelphia, who was accompanied by his son, afterwards one of the Colonial Governors of Pennsylvania, Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant, and Messrs. Onion and Russell, the masters of the Principio Iron Works in Cecil County, Maryland, had engaged the great cabin of the ship; so that it looked as if Benjamin and Ralph, who were unknown to any of the cabin passengers, were doomed to the obscurity and discomfort of the steerage. But, while the ship was at New Castle, the elder Hamilton was recalled to Philadelphia by a great fee in a maritime cause, and, just before she sailed, Col. French came on board, and treated Benjamin with such marked respect that he and Ralph were invited by the remaining cabin passengers to occupy the cabin with them—an invitation which the two gladly accepted. They had good reason to do so. The cabin passengers formed a congenial company, the plenteous supply of provisions laid in by Andrew Hamilton,

with the stores to which they were added, enabled them to live uncommonly well, and Mr. Denham contracted a lasting friendship for Benjamin. The latter, however, had not lost sight of the letters from Keith which had been so long on their way to his hands. As soon as he learnt at New Castle that Col. French had brought the Governor's dispatches aboard, he asked the captain for the letters that were to be under his care. The captain said that all were put into the bag together, and that he could not then come at them, but that, before they landed in England, Benjamin should have the opportunity of picking them out. When the Channel was reached, the captain was as good as his word, and Benjamin went through the bag; but no letters did he find that were addressed in his care. He picked out six or seven, however, that he thought from the handwriting might be the promised letters, especially as one was addressed to Basket, the King's printer, and another to some stationer. On the 24th day of December, 1724, the ship reached London. The first person that Benjamin waited upon was the stationer, to whom he delivered the letter addressed to him, with the statement that it came from Governor Keith. "I don't know such a person," the stationer said, but, on opening the letter, he exclaimed, "O! this is from Riddlesden. I have lately found him to be a compleat rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him." With that he gave the letter back to Benjamin and turned on his heel to serve a customer. Then it was that Benjamin, putting two and two together, began to doubt Keith's sincerity, and looked up Mr. Denham, and told him what had happened. There was not the least probability, Mr. Denham declared, that Keith had written any letters for him. No one, he said, who knew the Governor, trusted him in the slightest degree, and, as for his giving a letter of credit to Benjamin, he had no credit to give. One advantage, however, Benjamin reaped from the decep-

tion practised upon him. Both Mr. Denham and himself as well as the stationer knew that Riddlesden was a knave. Not to go further, Deborah's father by becoming surety for him had been half ruined. His letter disclosed the fact that there was a scheme on foot to the prejudice of Andrew Hamilton, and also the fact that Keith was concerned in it with Riddlesden; so, when Hamilton came over to London shortly afterwards, partly from ill will to Keith and Riddlesden, and partly from good will to Hamilton, Benjamin adopted the advice of Mr. Denham and waited on him, and gave him the letter. He thanked Benjamin warmly, and from that time became his friend, to his very great advantage on many future occasions. "I got his son once £500," notes the grateful Franklin briefly in a foot-note of the *Autobiography*.

By cozenage almost incredible, Benjamin, at the age of eighteen, had been thus lured off to London; the London of Addison, Pope and Sir Isaac Newton. Rather than confess the emptiness of his flattering complaisance Keith preferred to rely upon the chance that, once in London, the youth would be either unable or disinclined to return to his own native land. It would be hard to say what might have become of him if he had not had the skill as a printer which exemplified in a striking way the truth of two of the sayings of Poor Richard, "He that hath a Trade hath an Estate" and "He that hath a Calling, hath an Office of Profit and Honour."

The most serious stumbling block to his advancement in London was the one that he brought over seas with him, namely, Ralph himself, who had deserted his wife and child in Philadelphia, and now let his companion know for the first time that he never meant to return to that city. All the money that Ralph had, when he left home, had been consumed by the expenses of the voyage, but Benjamin was still the possessor of fifteen pistoles when the voyage was over, and from this sum Ralph occasionally borrowed

while he was endeavoring to convert some of his high-flown ambitions into practical realities. First, he applied for employment as an actor, only to be told by Wilkes that he could never succeed on the stage, then he tried to induce Roberts, a publisher in Paternoster Row, to establish a weekly periodical like the *Spectator*, with himself as the Addison, on certain conditions to which Roberts would not give his assent. Finally, he was driven to the stress of seeking employment as a copyist for stationers and lawyers about the Temple, but he could not find an opening for even such ignoble drudgery as this. Soon all of Benjamin's pistoles were gone. But, in the meantime, with his training as a printer, he had secured employment without difficulty at Palmer's, a famous printing-house in Bartholomew Close, where he remained for nearly a year. Here he labored pretty diligently, but with Ralph as well as himself to maintain, and with the constant temptations to expense, afforded by playhouses and other places of amusement, he was unable to hoard enough money to pay his passage back to Philadelphia.

For a time, after Ralph and himself arrived at London, they were inseparable companions, occupying the same lodgings in Little Britain, the home of bookstalls, and sharing the same purse. But when Ralph drifted off into the country, all intercourse between the friends was brought to an end by the overtures that Benjamin made to his mistress in his absence. It was then that Benjamin, relieved of the burden which the pecuniary necessities of Ralph had imposed on him, began to think of laying aside a little money, and left Palmer's to work at Watts' near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a still more important printing-house, where he was employed so long as he remained in London. His reminiscences of this printing-house are among the most interesting in the *Autobiography*. One episode during his connection with it presents him to us with some of the lines of his subsequent maturity

plainly impressed on him. "I drank," he says, "only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great guzzlers of beer." When they observed that his physical strength was superior to theirs, they wondered that the Water-American, as they called him, should be stronger than they who drank strong beer. A boy was incessantly running between an alehouse and the printing-house for the purpose of keeping the latter supplied with drink. Benjamin's pressmate drank every day a pint of beer before breakfast, a pint at breakfast, with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another pint when he had done his day's work. Franklin vainly endeavored to convince him that the physical strength, produced by beer, could only be in proportion to the grain or barley-flour dissolved in water that the beer contained, that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread, and that, therefore, if he would eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer. As it was, he had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for muddling liquor, and in this way he and his fellow-workmen kept themselves always under.

Benjamin began at Watts' as a pressman, but, after some weeks of service, he was transferred by the master to the composing-room. There a toll of five shillings for drink was demanded of him by the other compositors as the price of his admission to their society. At first he refused to pay it, as he had already paid a similar *bienvenu* in the press-room, and the master followed his refusal up by positively forbidding him to pay it; but after a few weeks of recusancy he learnt how despotic a thing an inveterate custom is. He was excommunicated for a while by all his fellow-workmen, and could not leave the composing-room for even the briefest time without having his sorts mixed or his pages transposed by the Chapel ghost,

who was said to have a deep grudge against all imperfectly initiated compositors. Master or no master, he finally found himself forced to comply with the custom and to pay the exaction, convinced as he became of the folly of being on ill terms with those with whom one is bound to live continually. Erelong his offence was forgotten, and his influence firmly established among his fellow-compositors. It was prevailing enough to enable him to propose some reasonable changes in the Chapel laws, and to carry them through in the face of all opposition. At the same time, the example of temperance, set by him, induced a great part of his companions to give up their breakfast of beer, bread and cheese, and to supply themselves from a neighboring public-house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, seasoned with butter and pepper, and crumbed with bread, for the price of a pint of beer, namely, three half-pence. This made a more comfortable as well as a cheaper breakfast, and one that left their heads clear besides. Those of Benjamin's fellow-workmen whom he could not reclaim fell into the habit of using his credit for the purpose of getting beer when their *light* at the alehouse, to use their own cant expression, was out. To protect himself, he stood by the pay-table on Saturday night, and collected enough from their wages to cover the sums for which he had made himself responsible, amounting sometimes to as much as thirty shillings a week. The loan of his credit in this way and his humor gave him an assured standing in the composing-room. On the other hand, his steadiness—for he never, he says, made a St. Monday—recommended him to the favor of his master; and his uncommon quickness in composing enabled him to secure the higher compensation which was paid for what would now be termed "rush work." His situation was at this time very agreeable and his mind became intently fixed upon saving as much of his wages as he could.

Finding that his lodgings in Little Britain were rather remote from his work, he obtained others in Duke Street, opposite the Romish Chapel, with a widow, who had been bred a Protestant, but had been converted to Catholicism by her husband, whose memory she deeply revered. It is a pleasing face that looks out at us from the portrait painted of her by Franklin in the *Autobiography*. She

had lived much among people of distinction, and knew a thousand anecdotes of them as far back as the time of Charles the Second. She was lame in her knees with the gout, and, therefore, seldom stirred out of her room, so sometimes wanted company; and hers was so highly amusing to me, that I was sure to spend an evening with her whenever she desired it. Our supper was only half an anchovy each, on a very little strip of bread and butter, and half a pint of ale between us; but the entertainment was in her conversation. My always keeping good hours, and giving little trouble in the family, made her unwilling to part with me; so that, when I talk'd of a lodging I had heard of, nearer my business, for two shillings a week, which, intent as I now was on saving money, made some difference, she bid me not think of it, for she would abate me two shillings a week for the future, so I remained with her at one shilling and six pence as long as I staid in London.

It was in the garret of this house that the nun mentioned by us in connection with the religious opinions of Franklin passed her secluded life.

It was while he resided here that Wygate, a fellow-printer, made a proposal to him that, if accepted, might have given a different direction to his career. Drawn to Benjamin, who had taught him how to swim, by common intellectual tastes, and by the admiration excited in him by Benjamin's vigor and agility as a swimmer, he suggested to the latter that they should travel all over Europe together, and support themselves as they went by the exercise of their handicraft. Benjamin was disposed

to adopt the suggestion, but, when he mentioned it to his friend, Mr. Denham, upon whom he was in the habit of calling, the latter disapproved of it, and advised him to dismiss every thought from his mind except that of returning to Pennsylvania, which he was about to do himself. Nay more, he told Benjamin that he expected to take over a large amount of merchandise with him, and to open a store in Philadelphia; and he offered to employ Benjamin as his clerk to keep his books, when the latter had acquired a sufficient knowledge of bookkeeping under his instruction, copy his letters, and attend to the store. In addition, he promised that, as soon as Benjamin should have the requisite experience, he would promote him by sending him with a cargo of bread-stuffs to the West Indies, and would, moreover, procure profitable commissions for him from others, and, if Benjamin made a success of these opportunities, establish him in life handsomely. The proposal was accepted by Benjamin. He was tired of London, remembered with pleasure the happy months spent by him in Pennsylvania, and was desirous of seeing it again. He agreed, therefore, at once, to become Mr. Denham's clerk at an annual salary of fifty pounds, Pennsylvania money. This was less than he was earning at the time as a compositor, but Mr. Denham's offer held out the prospect of a better future on the whole to him.

After entering into this agreement, Benjamin supposed that he was done with printing forever. During the interval preceding the departure of Mr. Denham and himself for America, he went about with his employer, when he was purchasing goods, saw that the goods were packed properly for shipment, and performed other helpful offices. After the stock of goods had been all safely stored on shipboard, he was, to his surprise, sent for by Sir William Wyndham, who had heard of his swimming exploits, and who offered to pay him generously, if he would teach his two sons, who were about to travel, how

to swim; but the two youths had not yet come to town, and Benjamin did not know just when he would sail; so he was compelled to decline the invitation. The offer of Sir William, however, made him feel that he might earn a good deal of money, were he to remain in England and open a swimming school, and the reflection forced itself upon his attention so strongly that he tells us in the *Autobiography* that, if Sir William had approached him earlier, he would probably not have returned to America so soon.

He left Gravesend for Philadelphia on July 23, 1726, after having been in London for about eighteen months. During the greater part of this time, he had worked hard, and spent but little money upon himself except in seeing plays and for books. It was Ralph who had kept him straitened by borrowing sums from him amounting in the whole to about twenty-seven pounds. "I had by no means improv'd my fortune," Franklin tells us in the *Autobiography*, "but I had picked up some very ingenious acquaintance, whose conversation was of great advantage to me; and I had read considerably."[1]

After a long voyage, he was again in Philadelphia, and Keith was now a private citizen. When Benjamin met him on the street, he showed a little shame at the sight of his dupe, but he passed on without saying anything. Keimer seemed to have a flourishing business. He had moved into a better house, and had a shop well supplied

[1] In his edition of Franklin's works, vol. x., p. 154, Smyth says of him, when he was in London in his youth, "His nights were spent in cynical criticism of religion or in the company of dissolute women." It is likely enough that the religious skepticism of Franklin at this time found expression in his conversation as well as in his *Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity*, though there is no evidence to justify the extreme statement that his nights *were spent* in irreligious talk. His days, we do know, were partly spent in listening to London preachers. He may have had good reason, too, to utter a *peccavi* in other sexual relations than those that he so disastrously attempted to sustain to Ralph's mistress; but of this there is no evidence whatever.

with stationery, plenty of type, and a number of hands, though none of them were efficient.

Mr. Denham opened a store in Water Street, and the merchandise brought over with him was placed in it. Benjamin gave his diligent attention to the business, studied accounts, and was in a little while an expert salesman. But then came one of those sudden strokes of misfortune, which remind us on what perfidious foundations all human hopes rest. Beginning with his relations to Mr. Denham, Franklin narrates the circumstances in these words:

> We lodg'd and boarded together; he counsell'd me as a father, having a sincere regard for me. I respected and loved him, and we might have gone on together very happy, but, in the beginning of February, 1726/7, when I had just pass'd my twenty-first year, we both were taken ill. My distemper was a pleurisy, which very nearly carried me off. I suffered a good deal, gave up the point in my own mind, and was rather disappointed when I found myself recovering, regretting, in some degree, that I must now, some time or other, have all that disagreeable work to do over again. I forget what his distemper was; it held him a long time, and at length carried him off. He left me a small legacy in a nuncupative will, as a token of his kindness for me, and he left me once more to the wide world; for the store was taken into the care of his executors, and my employment under him ended.

Franklin did have all that disagreeable work to do over again, for it was of a pleuritic abscess that he died in the end. Of Mr. Denham we cannot take our leave without drawing upon the *Autobiography* for an incident which shows that he was one of the many good men whose friendship was given so generously to Franklin. He was at one time a merchant at Bristol, and failed in business. After compounding with his numerous creditors, he migrated to America where he made a fortune

in a few years. While he was in England with Benjamin, he invited his former creditors to an entertainment, and, when they were all seated, thanked them for the easy terms on which they had compromised their claims against him. Duly thanked, they supposed that there was nothing in store for them but the ordinary hospitality of such an occasion, but, when each turned his plate over, he found under it an order upon a banker for the full amount, with interest, of the unpaid balance of the debt that he had released.

At the time of Mr. Denham's death, Franklin had only recently arrived at the age of twenty-one. Holmes, his brother-in-law, now urged him to return to his trade, and Keimer offered him a liberal yearly wage to take charge of his printing-office, so that he himself might have more time for his stationery business. Franklin had heard a bad character of Keimer in London from Keimer's wife and her friends, and he was reluctant to have anything more to do with him; so much so that he endeavored to secure employment as a merchant's clerk, but, being unable to do so, he closed with Keimer.

I found in his house [says the *Autobiography*] these hands: Hugh Meredith, a Welsh Pennsilvanian, thirty years of age, bred to country work; honest, sensible, had a great deal of solid observation, was something of a reader, but given to drink. Stephen Potts, a young countryman of full age, bred to the same, of uncommon natural parts, and great wit and humour, but a little idle. These he had agreed with at extream low wages per week, to be rais'd a shilling every three months, as they would deserve by improving in their business; and the expectation of these high wages, to come on hereafter, was what he had drawn them in with. Meredith was to work at press, Potts at book-binding, which he, by agreement, was to teach them, though he knew neither one nor t'other. John,—a wild Irishman, brought up to no business, whose service, for four years, Keimer had purchased from the captain of a ship;

he, too, was to be made a pressman. George Webb, an Oxford scholar, whose time for four years he had likewise bought, intending him for a compositor, of whom more presently; and David Harry, a country boy, whom he had taken apprentice.

George Webb is later described by Franklin as being lively, witty, good-natured and a pleasant companion, but idle, thoughtless, and imprudent to the last degree. While a student at Oxford, he had become possessed with the desire to see London and be a player. Yielding to this impulse, he walked outside of Oxford, hid his gown in a furze bush, and strode on to London where he fell into bad company, spent all his money, pawned his clothes and lacked bread; having failed to secure an opening as a player. While in this situation, he was induced by his necessities to bind himself to go over to America as an indentured servant, and this he did without ever writing a line to his friends to let them know what had become of him. John, the Irishman, soon absconded. With the rest of Keimer's awkward squad, Franklin quickly formed very agreeable relations, all the more so because they had found Keimer incapable of teaching them, but now found that Franklin taught them something daily. By Keimer, too, Franklin was for a time treated with great civility and apparent regard. The selfish reasons for such treatment were patent enough.

Our printing-house [declares the *Autobiography*] often wanted sorts, and there was no letter-founder in America; I had seen types cast at James's in London, but without much attention to the manner; however, I now contrived a mould, made use of the letters we had as puncheons, struck the matrices in lead, and thus supply'd in a pretty tolerable way all deficiencies. I also engrav'd several things on occasion; I made the ink; I was warehousman, and everything, and, in short, quite a fac-totum.

Keimer was simply using Franklin to lick his rough cubs into shape. The value of Franklin's services declined every day as his other hands became more efficient, and, when he paid him his wages for the second quarter, he let him know that he thought that he should submit to a reduction. By degrees, he grew less civil, assumed a more imperious air, became fault-finding and captious, and seemed ready for an outbreak. Nevertheless, Franklin preserved his patience, thinking that Keimer's demeanor was partly due to his embarrassed circumstances. But a very small spark was enough to produce an explosion. Startled one day by a loud noise near the court-house, Franklin put his head out of the window of the printing-office to see what was the matter. Just then, Keimer, who was in the street, looked up and saw him, and called out to him in vociferous and angry tones to mind his business, adding some reproachful words that nettled Franklin the more because they were heard by the whole neighborhood. Keimer made things still worse by coming up into the printing-office and continuing his rebuke. High words passed between the two, and Keimer gave Franklin the quarter's notice to quit, to which he was entitled, saying as he did it that he wished he could give him a shorter one. Franklin replied that the wish was unnecessary, and, taking up his hat, walked out of doors, requesting Meredith, as he left, to take care of some of his things that remained behind him, and to bring them to his lodgings. This Meredith, who had a great regard for Franklin, and regretted very much the thought of being in the printing-office without him, did the evening of the same day, and he availed himself of the opportunity to dissuade Franklin from returning to New England. Keimer, he said, was in debt for all that he possessed, his creditors were beginning to be uneasy, and he managed his shop wretchedly, often selling without profit for ready money, and frequently giving credit without keeping an

account. He must, therefore, fail, which would make an opening for Franklin. To this reasoning Franklin objected his want of means. Meredith then informed him that his father had a high opinion of him, and, from some things, that his father had said to him, he was sure that, if Franklin would enter into a partnership with him, the elder Meredith would advance enough money to set them going in business. His time with Keimer, he further said, would be out in the spring. Before then, they might procure their press and type from London. "I am sensible," added Meredith, "I am no workman; if you like it, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish, and we will share the profits equally."

Franklin acceded to the proposal, and Meredith's father ratified it all the more willingly as he saw that Franklin had a great deal of influence with his son, had prevailed on him to abstain from dram-drinking for long periods of time, and might be able to induce him to give up the miserable habit entirely when they came to form the close relations of partners with each other. An inventory of what was needed for the business was accordingly given to the father; an order for it was placed by him in the hands of a merchant; and the things were sent for. Until they arrived, the partnership was to be kept secret, and Franklin was to seek employment from Bradford. Bradford, however, was not in need of a hand, and for some days Franklin was condemned to idleness. But opportunely enough the chance presented itself to Keimer just at this time of being employed to print some paper money for the Province of New Jersey which would require cuts and type that nobody but Franklin was clever enough to excute or make. Fearing that Bradford might employ him, and secure the work, Keimer sent Franklin word that old friends should not be estranged by a few passionate words, and that he hoped Franklin would return to him. Influenced by the desire of Meredith to

derive still further benefit from his instruction, Franklin did return to Keimer, and entered upon relations with him that proved more satisfactory than any that he had had with him for some time past. Keimer secured the New Jersey contract.

The New Jersey jobb was obtain'd [the *Autobiography* states], I contriv'd a copperplate press for it, the first that had been seen in the country; I cut several ornaments and checks for the bills. We went together to Burlington, where I executed the whole to satisfaction; and he received so large a sum for the work as to be enabled thereby to keep his head much longer above water.

One of the attractive things about the youth of Franklin is the extent to which his love of reading and intellectual superiority gave him a standing with distinguished or prominent men much older than himself. In the case of Sir William Keith, the standing produced nothing but deception and disappointment, but, in the case of Cotton Mather, it supplied Franklin with one of those moral lessons for which his mind had such an eager appetency.

The last time I saw your father [he wrote late in life to Samuel Mather, the son of Cotton] was in the beginning of 1724, when I visited him after my first trip to Pennsylvania. He received me in his library, and on my taking leave showed me a shorter way out of the house through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam overhead. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly toward him, when he said hastily, *Stoop, stoop!* I did not understand him, till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me, "*You are young, and have the world before you;* STOOP *as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.*" This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me; and I often think of it, when I see pride mortified, and misfortune brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high.

Gov. William Burnet, of New York, the son of the famous English Bishop of that name, was another conspicuous personage to whose friendly notice the youth was brought. Shortly after the apt admonition of Cotton Mather, when Franklin was on his return to Philadelphia, the Governor heard from the captain of the vessel, by which Franklin had been conveyed to New York, that a young man, one of his passengers, had a great many books with him, and asked the captain to bring this young man to see him. The Governor loved books and lovers of books.

I waited upon him accordingly [says Franklin] and should have taken Collins with me but that he was not sober. The gov'r. treated me with great civility, show'd me his library, which was a very large one, and we had a good deal of conversation about books and authors. This was the second governor who had done me the honour to take notice of me; which, to a poor boy like me, was very pleasing.

The happy consequences to Ralph and himself of the respect, shown him by Col. French at New Castle, and the lasting sense of gratitude that he soon afterwards excited in Andrew Hamilton have just been mentioned. This capacity for arresting the attention of men of years and influence now made its mark in New Jersey. Some of the principal men of the province were appointed by the Assembly to oversee the working of Keimer's press, and to take care that no more bills were printed than were authorized by law. They discharged this duty by turns, and usually each one, when he came, brought a friend or so with him for company. In this way, Franklin was introduced to a considerable group of persons who invited him to their houses, introduced him to their friends, and showed him much attention. Keimer, on the other hand, perhaps, Franklin surmises, because his mind had not been so much improved by reading as

his, was a little neglected, though the master. The explanation given by Franklin for this neglect would seem a rather inadequate one when we recollect that in the same context he sums up the character of Keimer in these trenchant words: "In truth, he was an odd fish; ignorant of common life, fond of rudely opposing receiv'd opinions, slovenly to extream dirtiness, enthusiastic in some points of religion, and a little knavish withal." Like St. Sebastian, poor Keimer will never be drawn without that arrow in his side.

For three months Franklin remained at Burlington, making printer's ink money. At the end of that time, he could reckon among his friends Judge Allen, Samuel Bustill, the Secretary of the Province, Isaac Pearson, Joseph Cooper, and several of the Smiths, members of the Assembly, and Isaac Decow, the surveyor-general.

> The latter [he says] was a shrewd, sagacious old man, who told me that he began for himself, when young, by wheeling clay, for the brickmakers, learned to write after he was of age, carri'd the chain for surveyors, who taught him surveying and he had now by his industry, acquir'd a good estate; and says he, "I foresee that you will soon work this man out of his business, and make a fortune in it at Philadelphia." He had not then the least intimation of my intention to set up there or anywhere. These friends were afterwards of great use to me, as I occasionally was to some of them. They all continued their regard for me as long as they lived.

Shortly after the completion of the New Jersey contract, the new type, which had been ordered for Franklin and Meredith from London, arrived at Philadelphia. With Keimer's consent, the two friends left him before he knew of its arrival. They rented a house near the market, and, to reduce the rent of twenty-four pounds a year, they sublet a part of it to Thomas Godfrey, who was to board them. They had scarcely made ready for busi-

ness when George House, an acquaintance of Franklin, brought to them a countryman who had inquired of him on the street where he could find a printer. By this countryman the firm was paid for the work that he gave them the sum of five shillings, and this sum, Franklin declares in the *Autobiography*, being their first fruits, and coming in at a time when they had expended all their available cash in preparing for business, awakened more pleasure in him than any crown that he had ever since earned, and, besides, made him prompter than he, perhaps, would otherwise have been to help beginners. Whether there were any "boomers," to use the cant term of to-day, in Philadelphia at that time the *Autobiography* does not tell us, but there was, to use another cant term of to-day, at least one "knocker."

There are croakers in every country [says Franklin in the *Autobiography*] always boding its ruin. Such a one then lived in Philadelphia: a person of note, an elderly man, with a wise look and a very grave manner of speaking; his name was Samuel Mickle. This gentleman, a stranger to me, stopt one day at my door, and asked me if I was the young man who had lately opened a new printing-house. Being answered in the affirmative, he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive undertaking, and the expense would be lost; for Philadelphia was a sinking place, the people already half bankrupts, or near being so; all appearances to the contrary, such as new buildings and the rise of rents, being to his certain knowledge fallacious, for they were, in fact, among the things that would soon ruin us. And he gave me such a detail of misfortunes now existing, or that were soon to exist, that he left me half melancholy. Had I known him before I engaged in this business, probably I never should have done it. This man continued to live in this decaying place, and to declaim in the same strain, refusing for many years to buy a house there, because all was going to destruction; and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have bought it for when he first began his croaking.

The outlook of Franklin was a cheerful, optimistic one, and he had no sympathy with pessimists of any sort. Even his civic interests came back to him in personal profit, since, aside from its public aims, the Junto was a most useful aid to the business of Franklin and Meredith. All its members made a point of soliciting patronage for the new printing firm. Breintnal, for instance, obtained for it the privilege of printing forty sheets of the history which the Quakers published of their sect; the rest having gone to Keimer. The price was low, and the job cost Franklin and Meredith much hard labor. The work, Franklin tells us, with the fond minuteness with which a man is disposed to dwell upon the events of his early life, was a folio, of *pro patria* size, and in pica, with long primer notes. Franklin composed it at the rate of a sheet a day, and Meredith ran off what was composed at the press. It was often eleven at night and later, when Franklin had completed his distribution for the work of the next day, for now and then he was set back by other business calls. So resolved, however, was he never to default on his sheet a day that one night, when one of his forms was accidentally broken up, and two pages of his work reduced to pi, he immediately distributed and composed it over again before he went to bed, though he had supposed, when the accident occurred, that a hard day's task had ended. This industry brought the firm into favorable notice, and especially was Franklin gratified by what Dr. Baird had to say about it. When the new printing-office was mentioned at the Merchants' Every Night Club, and the opinion was generally expressed that three printing-offices could not be maintained in Philadelphia, he took issue with this view; "For the industry of that Franklin," he said, "is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind; I see him still at work when I go home from club, and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed." This statement led one of the persons who heard it to offer to fur-

nish the new firm with stationery; but it was not yet ready to open a stationery shop.

About this time, George Webb, who had bought his time of Keimer, with the aid of one of his female friends, solicited from the firm employment as a journeyman. Its situation was not such as to warrant his employment, but Franklin indiscreetly let him know as a secret that he expected to establish a newspaper soon; when he might have work for him. Bradford's newspaper, *The American Mercury*, he told Webb, was a paltry thing, stupid and wretchedly managed, and yet was profitable. "Three can keep a Secret if two are dead," is a saying of Poor Richard. It would have been well if Franklin on this occasion had been mindful of the wisdom in which it was conceived. He requested Webb not to mention what he said; but, as is often true under such circumstances, it would have been more prudent for him to have asked him to mention it. Webb did tell Keimer, and he immediately published the prospectus of a newspaper on which Webb was to be employed. This was resented by Franklin, and, to counteract the scheme, he and his friend Breintnal wrote some clever little essays for Bradford's newspaper under the title of the "Busy Body." In that dull sheet, they were, to borrow Shakespeare's image, like bright metal on sullen ground. Public attention was fixed upon them, and Keimer's prospectus was overlooked. He founded his newspaper nevertheless, and conducted it for nine months under the prolix name of the *Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences and Pennsylvania Gazette*. It never had, at any time, more than ninety subscribers, and, at the end of the nine months, in 1729, Franklin, who had for some time had his arms extended to catch it when it fell, bought it at a trifling price. Under his ownership, the cumbrous name of the paper was cut down simply to that of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and the absurd plan formed by Keimer of publishing an instalment

of Chambers' Universal Dictionary of all the Arts and Sciences in every issue was abandoned for a strain of original comment and unctuous humor which made the *Gazette* in popularity second only to *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Under Franklin's hands, the paper assumed from the beginning a better typographical appearance than any previously known to the Province, and some spirited observations by him on a controversy between Governor Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, which called into play his aversion to political tyranny, aroused so much public attention that all the leading citizens of the Province became subscribers. Many other subscribers followed in their train, and the subscriptions went on continually increasing until in a few years, to quote Franklin's own words, the *Gazette* proved extremely profitable to him.

> This was one of the first good effects of my having learnt a little to scribble [he tells us], another was that the leading men, seeing a newspaper now in the hands of one who could also handle a pen, thought it convenient tc oblige and encourage me. Bradford still printed the Votes and laws, and other publick business. He had printed an address of the House to the Governor, in a coarse, blundering manner; we reprinted it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every member. They were sensible of the difference: it strengthened the hands of our friends in the House, and they voted us their printers for the year ensuing.

Among these friends, was the grateful Andrew Hamilton.

The young printer had pushed himself forward successfully enough to make his competition keenly felt by both Keimer and Bradford. But now unexpectedly, when all the omens were so fair, he found himself on the brink of ruin. For some time past, he had faithfully observed his obligations to Meredith, though his friends lamented his connection with him. Meredith was no compositor,

and but a poor pressman, and, if he had been the best compositor or pressman in the world, he would have been a poor partner, for he was seldom sober. While Franklin was bearing him along on his back as well as he could, Meredith's father found himself unable to advance for the firm the second instalment of one hundred pounds, necessary to complete the payment for its printing outfit. The result was that the merchant, who had sold it to the firm, grew impatient, and sued them all. They gave bail, but realized that, if the money could not be raised in time, judgment and execution would follow, and that the outfit would be sold at half price. Then it was, to recall the simple and affecting words of Franklin himself in the *Autobiography*, that two true friends, William Coleman and Robert Grace, whose kindness he had never forgotten, and never would forget, while he could remember anything, came to him separately, unknown to each other, and, without any application from him, each offered to advance to him all the money that should be necessary to enable him to acquire the whole business of the firm, if that should be practicable.[1] They did not like the idea of his continuing to be a partner of Meredith, who, they said, was often seen drunk in the streets, and playing at low games in alehouses to the discredit of the firm. Distressing, however, as his situation was, Franklin appears to have acted with a high-minded regard to the proprieties of the occasion. He told Coleman and Grace that, so long as there was any prospect that the Merediths might live up to their agreement, he was under too great obligations to them for what they had done, and would do, if they could, to suggest a dissolution of the partnership, but

[1] The ineffaceable impression of gratitude left upon the mind of Franklin by the timely assistance of these two dear friends was again expressed in the Codicil to his Will executed in 1789. In it he speaks of himself as "assisted to set up" his business in Philadelphia by kind loans of money from two friends there, which was the foundation, he said, of his fortune and of all the utility in life that might be ascribed to him.

that, if they finally defaulted in the performance of their part of the agreement, and the partnership was dissolved, he would feel at liberty to accept the assistance of his friends.

But he was astute as well as conscientious. After the matter had rested in this position for some time, he said to Meredith:

> Perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you alone. If that is the case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business.
>
> No, said he, my father has really been disappointed, and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him farther. I see this is a busness I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was a folly in me to come to town, and put myself, at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I am inclin'd to go with them, and follow my old employment. You may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you; return to my father the hundred pound he has advanced; pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership, and leave the whole in your hands.

Franklin agreed to this proposal. It was made the basis of a contract which was immediately signed and sealed. Meredith received the thirty pounds and the saddle, and soon afterwards went off to North Carolina, whence he sent to Franklin the next year two long letters containing the best account of the climate, soil, husbandry and other features of that Province that had been given up to that time. "For in those matters," adds Franklin, with his usual generosity, "he was very judicious. I printed them in the papers, and they gave great satisfaction to the publick."

After the departure of Meredith for North Carolina, Franklin turned to the two friends who had proffered their help. He accepted from each of them, because he would not give an unkind preference to either, one half of the money he needed, paid off the debts of the partnership, advertised its dissolution and went on with the business in his own name. This was on July 14, 1730.

Seasonably for him, there was a loud cry among the people at this time for a more abundant issue of paper money. The wealthier members of the community were all against the proposition. They feared that an addition to the existing paper circulation would depreciate, as it had done in New York, and that the debts due to them would be discharged by payment in a medium worth less than its nominal value. The question was discussed by the Junto, and Franklin argued in favor of the issue; being persuaded that the prosperity of the Province had been very much promoted by a small previous issue of paper money in 1723. He remembered, he says in the *Autobiography*, that, when he first walked about the streets of Philadelphia, eating his roll, most of the houses on Walnut Street, between Second and Front Streets, and many besides, on Chestnut and other streets, were placarded, "To be let"; which made him feel as if the inhabitants of Philadelphia were deserting the town one after the other; whereas at the time of this discussion all the old houses were occupied, and many new ones were in process of construction. Not content with presenting his views on the subject to the Junto, he wrote an anonymous pamphlet on it entitled *The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*. This pamphlet was well received by the common people, he tells us, but met with the disfavor of the rich, because it swelled the clamor for more money. Their opposition, however, for lack of writers, competent to refute its reasoning, languished, and the issue was authorized by the Assembly. Franklin's friends in the

house rewarded him for his part in the controversy over it by employing him to print the money. "A very profitable jobb and a great help to me," remarks Franklin complacently in the *Autobiography*, and he adds, "This was another advantage gain'd by my being able to write."

Through the influence of his friend Hamilton, he likewise secured the contract for printing the paper money, issued by the Three Lower Counties on the Delaware. "Another profitable jobb as I then thought it," he says, "small things appearing great to those in small circumstances." Hamilton also procured for him the privilege of printing the laws and legislative proceedings of the Three Lower Counties, and he retained it as long as he remained in the printing business. Now, for the first time, he felt that his position was assured enough for him to open up a small stationery shop, where he sold blanks of all sorts, paper, parchment, chapmen's books and other such wares. The blanks he believed to be "the correctest that ever appear'd among us, being assisted in that by my friend Breintnal." The demands on his printing-office, too, increased to such a degree that he employed a compositor, one Whitemarsh, an excellent workman, whom he had known in London, and undertook the care of an apprentice, a son of the ever-to-be-lamented Aquila Rose. Soon he was prospering to such an extent that he could begin to pay off the debt that he owed on his printing outfit. These are the words in which he himself described his situation at this time:

> In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in *reality* industrious and frugal, but to avoid all appearances to the contrary. I drest plainly; I was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauch'd me from my work, but that was seldom, snug, and gave no scandal; and, to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchas'd at the stores thro' the

streets on a wheel-barrow. Thus being esteem'd an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on swimmingly. In the meantime, Keimer's credit and business declining daily, he was at last forc'd to sell his printing-house to satisfy his creditors. He went to Barbadoes, and there lived some years in very poor circumstances.

For some time before Keimer went off to Barbadoes, he had been in the condition of an unsound tree, which still stands but with a dry rot at its heart momentarily presaging its fall. As far back as Issue No. 27 of *The Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences*, and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, he had found it necessary to explain a week's delay in the publication of that issue by stating to the public that he had been awakened, when fast asleep in bed, about eleven at night, over-tired with the labor of the day, and taken away from his dwelling by a writ and summons; it being basely and confidently given out that he was that very night about to run away, though there was not the least color or ground for such a vile report. He was, he further declared, "the shuttlecock of fortune . . . the very but for villany to shoot at, or the continued mark for slander and her imps to spit their venom upon." It was remarkable, he thought, that

> a person of strict sincerity, refin'd justice, and universal love to the whole creation, should for a series of near twenty years, be the constant but of slander, as to be three times ruin'd as a master-printer, to be nine times in prison, one of which was six years together, and often reduc'd to the most wretched circumstances, hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, and persecuted with the most abominable lies the devil himself could invent or malice utter.

It was but the old story of the man, who is dizzy, thinking that the whole world is spinning around.

David Harry, Keimer's former apprentice, had also opened a printing-office in Philadelphia. When his enterprise was in its inception, Franklin regarded his rivalry with much uneasiness on account of his influential connections. He accordingly proposed a partnership to him, a proposal which, fortunately for the former, was disdainfully refused. "He was very proud," says Franklin, "dress'd like a gentleman, liv'd expensively, took much diversion and pleasure abroad, ran in debt, and neglected his business; upon which, all business left him." The result was that Harry had to follow Keimer to Barbadoes, taking his printing outfit with him. Here the former apprentice employed the former master as a journeyman; they frequently quarrelled with each other; Harry steadily fell behind, and was compelled to sell his type, and to return to his country work in Pennsylvania. The purchaser of the outfit employed Keimer to operate it, but, in a few years more, Keimer was transported by death out of the world, which for a considerable part of his life he had seen only through the gratings of a jail.

The departure of Harry left Franklin without any competitor except his old one, Bradford, who was too rich and easy-going to actively push for business. But, in one respect, Bradford was a formidable rival. He was the Postmaster at Philadelphia, and his newspaper flourished at the expense of the *Gazette* upon the public impression that his connection with the Post-office gave him facilities for gathering news and for circulating advertisements that Franklin did not enjoy.

To this period belong Franklin's treaty for a wife with enough means to discharge the balance of one hundred pounds still due on his printing outfit, and his final recoil to Deborah whose industry and frugality were far more than the pecuniary equivalent of one hundred pounds. After his marriage, he was, if anything, even more industrious than before, and this is what he has to

say about his habits and employments during the period that immediately followed that event:

Reading was the only amusement I allow'd myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolicks of any kind; and my industry in my business continu'd as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was indebted for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated, and I had to contend with for business two printers, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, "Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men," I from thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encourag'd me, tho' I did not think that I should ever literally *stand before* kings, which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before *five*, and even had the honour of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.

Another passage in the *Autobiography* tells us just what degree of frugality Franklin and Deborah practiced at this stage of his business career.

We kept no idle servants [he says], our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress, in spite of principle: being call'd one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserv'd a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house, which afterward,

in a course of years, as our wealth increas'd, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value.

In 1732 was first published, at fivepence a copy, Franklin's famous almanac known as *Poor Richard's Almanac*, which for twenty-five years warmed the homes of Pennsylvania with the ruddy glow of its wit, humor and wisdom. His endeavor in conducting it he tells us was to make it both entertaining and useful, and he was so successful that he reaped considerable profit from the nearly ten thousand copies of it that he annually sold. Hundreds of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania, who read nothing else, read the *Almanac*. Its infectious humor, its coarse pleasantry, its proverbs and sayings so much wiser than the wisdom, and so much wittier than the wit of any single individual, made the name of Franklin a common household word from one end of Pennsylvania to another, and, when finally strained off into Father Abraham's speech, established his reputation as a kindly humorist and moral teacher throughout the world.

In somewhat the same spirit of instruction as well as entertainment was the *Gazette*, too, conducted.

I considered my newspaper, also [says Franklin], as another means of communicating instruction, and in that view frequently reprinted in it extracts from the *Spectator*, and other moral writers; and sometimes publish'd little pieces of my own, which had been first compos'd for reading in our Junto.

The caution exercised by the *Gazette* in shutting out malice and personal abuse from its columns is the subject of one of the weightiest series of statements in the *Autobiography*.

In the conduct of my newspaper [Franklin declares] I carefully excluded all libelling and personal abuse, which is of late years become so disgraceful to our country. Whenever I was

solicited to insert anything of that kind, and the writers pleaded, as they generally did, the liberty of the press, and that a newspaper was like a stage-coach, in which any one who would pay had a right to a place, my answer was, that I would print the piece separately if desired, and the author might have as many copies as he pleased to distribute himself, but that I would not take upon me to spread his detraction; and that, having contracted with my subscribers to furnish them with what might be either useful or entertaining, I could not fill their papers with private altercation, in which they had no concern, without doing them manifest injustice. Now, many of our printers make no scruple of gratifying the malice of individuals by false accusations of the fairest characters among ourselves, augmenting animosity even to the producing of duels; and are, moreover, so indiscreet as to print scurrilous reflections on the government of neighboring states, and even on the conduct of our best national allies, which may be attended with the most pernicious consequences. These things I mention as a caution to young printers, and that they may be encouraged not to pollute their presses and disgrace their profession by such infamous practices, but refuse steadily, as they may see by my example that such a course of conduct will not, on the whole, be injurious to their interests.

By 1733 Franklin was sufficiently established in business to branch out still more. That year he sent one of his journeymen, Thomas Whitemarsh, to Charleston, South Carolina, where a printer was needed, under an agreement of partnership which was the prototype of most of the subsequent articles of copartnership formed by him with other printers under similar conditions; that is to say, he furnished the printing outfit, paid one third of the expenses, and received one third of the profits. The history of this partner gave Franklin an opportunity to moralize a little in the *Autobiography* upon the importance of a knowledge of accounts rather than of music or dancing as a part of female education. The Carolina printer was a man

of education and honest, but ignorant of accounts, and, though he made occasional remittances, Franklin could never get any account from him, nor any satisfactory statement of the condition of the partnership business. On his death, however, his widow, who had been born and bred in Holland, not only sent Franklin as clear a statement as was possible of the past transactions of the firm, but subsequently rendered him an exact account every quarter with the utmost punctuality, and, besides, managed the business with such success that she reared a family of children decently, and, upon the expiration of the copartnership, purchased the outfit from Franklin, and turned it over to her son.

The success of the Carolina partnership encouraged Franklin to form partnerships with other journeymen of his, and by 1743 he had opened three printing-offices in three different colonies, and proposed to open a fourth, if he could find a suitable person to take charge of it. Others were opened by him later. Among the persons besides Whitemarsh, established by him at different times as printers, under one arrangement or another with himself, were Peter Timothy in South Carolina, Smith and Benjamin Mecom in Antigua, James Parker in New York, his brother in Rhode Island, Hall and Miller and Samuel Holland at Lancaster, and William Daniell at Kingston, Jamaica. Speaking of his partners in the *Autobiography*, he says of them:

> Most of them did well, being enabled at the end of our term, six years, to purchase the types of me and go on working for themselves, by which means several families were raised. Partnerships often finish in quarrels; but I was happy in this, that mine were all carried on and ended amicably, owing, I think, a good deal to the precaution of having very explicitly settled, in our articles, everything to be done by or expected from each partner, so that there was nothing to dispute, which precaution I would therefore recommend to all who enter into

partnerships; for, whatever esteem partners may have for, and confidence in each other at the time of the contract, little jealousies and disgusts may arise, with ideas of inequality in the care and burden of the business, etc., which are attended often with breach of friendship and of the connection, perhaps with lawsuits and other disagreeable consequences.

Two other business enterprises of Franklin merit notice. He was the founder of the first newspaper in the United States to be published in a foreign tongue, namely, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*, which owed its origin to the large number of Germans who came over to Pennsylvania during the Colonial Period. He was also the founder of a monthly literary magazine which for some reason he does not mention in the *Autobiography* at all. It was the second enterprise of the kind undertaken in America, and was known as *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle for All the British Plantations in America*. To Franklin as a business man might aptly be applied the words of Emerson with respect to Guy:

> Stream could not so perversely wind
> But corn of Guy's was there to grind.

One exception, however, appears to have been this magazine which lasted but a short time. It was ill-starred from the start. When Franklin was ready to spring it upon the public, he engaged John Webbe as its editor, but Webbe betrayed the project to Bradford, who at once announced that, a little later, a magazine would be offered to the public edited by Webbe, and published by himself. When the first number of Franklin's magazine came out, he stated that its publication was earlier than he had intended because of the faithless conduct of Webbe. This Webbe resented by charging Franklin, who was then Postmaster at Philadelphia, with shutting out Bradford's *Mercury* from the post, but Franklin

silenced his fire by stating and proving that he had had no choice in the matter, because he had been commanded by Postmaster-General Spottswood, on account of Bradford's failure as Postmaster at Philadelphia to account with him, to suffer no longer any of his newspapers or letters to be conveyed by post free of charge.

The business of Franklin received another push forward with the political consequence which he acquired through the *Gazette* and the influence of the Junto. In 1736, he was chosen Clerk of the General Assembly, and in the succeeding year he was appointed Postmaster at Philadelphia, in the place of Bradford, by Alexander Spottswood, who had been Governor of Virginia, and was then the Deputy Postmaster-General for America. The salary of the Postmastership was small, but, for the purposes of the *Gazette*, the office gave him the same advantage that Bradford had enjoyed, when he refused to allow that newspaper to be carried by his post-riders. The positions of the two men were now reversed, but Franklin was too magnanimous to remind Bradford, sternly, as he did Jemmy Read, that Fortune's Wheel is ever turning. "My old competitor's newspaper," he says, "declin'd proportionably, and I was satisfy'd without retaliating his refusal, while postmaster, to permit my papers being carried by the riders." Bradford had suffered, Franklin adds, "for his neglect in due accounting." And this gave him occasion to observe that regularity and clearness in rendering accounts and punctuality in making remittances are "the most powerful of all recommendations to new employments and increase of business."

The office of Clerk of the Assembly also had its business value.

> Besides the pay for the immediate service as clerk [Franklin says] the place gave me a better opportunity of keeping up an interest among the members, which secur'd to me the

business of printing the votes, laws, paper money, and other occasional jobbs for the public, that, on the whole, were very profitable.

The first year that he came up for election the vote in his favor was unanimous, but the next year, while he was elected, it was only after a new member had made a long speech against him in the interest of another candidate. How Franklin conciliated the unfriendliness of this member is fully told in the *Autobiography:*

I therefore did not like the opposition of this new member, who was a gentleman of fortune and education, with talents that were likely to give him, in time, great influence in the House, which, indeed, afterwards happened. I did not, however, aim at gaining his favour by paying any servile respect to him, but, after some time, took this other method. Having heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting he would do me the favour of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately, and I return'd it in about a week with another note, expressing strongly my sense of the favour. When we next met in the House, he spoke to me (which he had never done before), and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends, and our friendship continued to his death. This is another instance of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says, "*He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged.*" And it shows how much more profitable it is prudently to remove, than to resent, return, and continue inimical proceedings.

The artifice practised by Franklin on this occasion has been condemned. What he really did, of course, was to use gratified vanity as a foil to mortified vanity. The possible consequences of the new member's hostility were too serious for him to say as Washington was in the habit of

saying when he had a bad cold: "Let it go as it came." He knew that the malice was as shallow as the good will; and the alternatives were resentment, sycophancy, or a little subtlety. Under the circumstances, Franklin would not have been Franklin, if he had not elected subtlety.

Nothing was now wanting to the full development of his business career except the repetition in other communities of the success that had crowned his personal exertions in Pennsylvania. Referring to the state of his business at this time, he says in the *Autobiography:*

> My business was now continually augmenting, and my circumstances growing daily easier, my newspaper having become very profitable, as being for a time almost the only one in this and the neighboring provinces. I experienced, too, the truth of the observation, "*that after getting the first hundred pound, it is more easy to get the second,*" money itself being of a prolific nature.

The outcome of it all was that, in the year 1748, at the age of forty-two, he flattered himself, to repeat his own language, that, by the sufficient, though moderate, fortune which he had acquired, he had secured leisure during the rest of his life for philosophical studies and amusements.

The plan that he formed for securing this leisure, which he turned to such fruitful purposes, was marked by his usual good judgment. In 1744, he had taken into his employment David Hall, a Scotch journeyman, and a friend of Strahan. He now admitted Hall to partnership with him. "A very able, industrious, and honest partner, Mr. David Hall, with whose character I was well acquainted, as he had work'd for me for four years," are the terms in which he speaks of Hall in the *Autobiography*. "He took off my hands," he continues, "all care of the printing-office, paying me punctually my share of the profits. The partnership continued eighteen years, successfully for us

both." Under the provisions of the partnership agreement, Hall was to carry on the printing and publishing business of Franklin in his own way, but in the firm name of Franklin and Hall, and Hall was to pay to Franklin a thousand pounds a year for eighteen years; at the end of which period Hall was to become the sole proprietor of the business.[1] Exactly what income Franklin was deriving from his printing and publishing business at the time that this agreement was entered into is not known, but reasonable conjecture has placed it at something like two thousand pounds a year. At that time he was also the owner of a considerable amount of property, representing invested returns from his business in the past. The *Gazette* continued to be published until the year 1821. When the term of eighteen years, during which the partnership was to last, expired in 1766, the profits had been over twelve thousand pounds, Pennsylvania currency, from subscriptions, and over four thousand pounds, Pennsylvania currency, from advertisements. Judged by the standards of the time and place, it was an extraordinary

[1] The interest of Franklin in the Art of Printing did not end with his retirement from his vocation as a printer. When he arrived in England in 1757, he is said to have visited the composing-room at Watts' printing establishment, where he was employed many years before, and to have celebrated the occasion by giving to the composing force there a *bienvenu*, or fee for drink, and proposing as a toast "Success to Printing." The type of Baskerville, the "charming Editions" of Didot *le Jeune*, the even finer *Sallust*, and *Don Quixote* of Madrid, and the method of cementing letters, conceived by John Walter, the founder of the *London Times*, all came in for his appreciative attention. It is said that the process of stereotyping was first communicated to Didot by him. When he visited the establishment of the latter, in 1780, he turned to one of his presses, and printed off several sheets with an ease which excited the astonishment of the printers about him. Until the close of his life he had a keen eye for a truly black ink and superfine printing paper and all the other niceties of his former calling. The only trace of eccentricity in his life is to be found in his methods of punctuation, which are marked by a sad lack of uniformity in the use of commas, semicolons and colons, and by the lavish employment of the devices to denote emphasis which someone has happily termed "typographical yells."

degree of success which had enabled Franklin in some twenty years to establish so lucrative a business as that which he handed over to the management of Hall in 1748, and few indeed have been the men in mercantile history, who have been willing, after so long a period of prosperous addiction to gain, to turn away to purely intellectual and unremunerative pursuits from such a prospect of increasing self-enrichment as that renounced by Franklin when he wrote to Cadwallader Colden that he, too, was taking the proper measures for obtaining leisure to enjoy life and his friends more than in the past; having put his printing-house under the care of his partner, David Hall, absolutely left off book-selling, and removed to a more quiet part of the town, where he was settling his old accounts, and hoped soon to be quite master of his own time, and no longer, as the song had it, at everyone's call but his own. Nobody knew better than he that, if, after getting the first hundred pounds, it is easier to get the second, it is still easier, after getting the second hundred pounds, to get the third.

For Hall, Franklin entertained uninterrupted feelings of respect and affection, down to the date of the former's death on December 17, 1772. "My Love to Mr. Hall," is one of his messages to Deborah some seven years after the firm of Franklin and Hall was created. Before that he had written to Strahan, "Our friend, Mr. Hall, is well, and manages perfectly to my satisfaction." Many years after the death of Hall, the account between Franklin and him had not been wholly settled, and a letter from the former to Strahan in the year 1785 tells him that Hall and himself had not been of the same mind as to "the value of a copyright in an established newspaper, of each of which from eight to ten thousand were printed," but "were to be determined" by Strahan's opinion. "My long absence from that country, and immense employment the little time I was there," Franklin wrote, "have

hitherto prevented the settlement of all the accounts that had been between us; though we never differed about them, and never should if that good honest man had continued in being."

Franklin's failure to forecast the stubborn hostility of the Colonies to the Stamp Act not only cost him some personal popularity but it caused his firm some pecuniary loss. Anticipating with his usual shrewdness the passage of that Act, which imposed a tax of a sterling half-penny on every half-sheet of a newspaper, however small, he sent over to Hall one hundred reams of large half-sheet paper, but permission could not be obtained to have it stamped in America, and it was all reshipped to England at a loss.

As to the Paper sent over [he wrote to Hall] I did it for the best, having at that time Expectations given me that we might have had it stampt there; in which case you would have had great Advantage of the other Printers, since if they were not provided with such Paper, they must have either printed but a half sheet common Demi, or paid for two Stamps on each Sheet. The Plan was afterward alter'd notwithstanding all I could do, it being alledged that Scotland & every Colony would expect the same Indulgence if it was granted to us. The Papers must not be sent back again: But I hope you will excuse what I did in Good will, tho' it happen'd wrong.

After the retirement of Franklin from active business, he still continued to hold his office as Postmaster at Philadelphia, and, while holding it, he was employed by the Deputy Postmaster-General for America as his comptroller to examine and audit the accounts of several of his subordinate officers. Upon the death of the Deputy Postmaster-General, he was appointed his successor, jointly with William Hunter, of Virginia, by the British Postmasters-General. When the pair were appointed, the office had never earned any net revenue for the British

Crown. Under the terms of their appointment, they were to have six hundred pounds a year between them, if they could make that sum out of its profits, and, when they entered upon it, so many improvements had to be effected by them that, in the first four years, it ran into debt to them to the extent of upwards of nine hundred pounds; but, under the skilful management of Franklin, it became remunerative, and, before he was removed by the British Government, after his arraignment before the Privy Council, it had been brought to yield three times as much clear revenue to the Crown as the Irish Post-office. "Since that imprudent transaction," Franklin observes in the *Autobiography*, "they have receiv'd from it—not one farthing!"

On August 10, 1761, eight years after the appointment of Franklin and Hunter, and a few weeks before Foxcroft succeeded Hunter, there was a net balance of four hundred and ninety-four pounds four shillings and eight pence due by the American Post-office to the British Crown; which was duly remitted. "And this," exclaims the astonished official record of the fact in England, "is the first remittance ever made of the kind." Between August 10, 1761, and the beginning of 1764, the net profits of the American Post-office amounted to two thousand and seventy pounds twelve shillings and three and one quarter pence, and drew from the British Postmasters-General the statement, "The Posts in America are under the management of persons of acknowledged ability." With this record of administrative success, it is not surprising that, when Franklin was removed from office, he should have written to Thomas Cushing these bitter words:

I received a written notice from the Secretary of the general postoffice, that His Majesty's postmaster-general *found it necessary* to dismiss me from my office of deputy postmaster-

general in North America. The expression was well chosen, for in truth they were *under a necessity* of doing it; it was not their own inclination; they had no fault to find with my conduct in the office; they knew my merit in it, and that, if it was now an office of value, it had become such chiefly through my care and good management; that it was worth nothing, when given to me; it would not then pay the salary allowed me, and, unless it did, I was not to expect it; and that it now produces near three thousand pounds a year clear to the treasury here. They had beside a personal regard for me. But as the postoffices in all the principal towns are growing daily more and more valuable, by the increase of correspondence, the officers being paid *commissions* instead of *salaries*, the ministers seem to intend, by directing me to be displaced on this occasion, to hold out to them all an example that, if they are not corrupted by their office to promote the measures of administration, though against the interests and rights of the colonies, they must not expect to be continued.

Not only was the American postal service made by Franklin's able management to yield a net revenue to the British Crown, but it was brought up to a much higher level of efficiency. For one thing, the mails between New York and Philadelphia were increased from one a week in summer and two a month in winter to three a week in summer and one a week in winter. In 1764, a Philadelphia merchant could mail a letter to New York and receive a reply the next day. For another thing, postriders were required to carry all newspapers offered to them for carriage whether the newspapers of postmasters or not. In the discharge of his postal duties, Franklin was compelled to make many long journeys outside of Pennsylvania, and these journeys did much, as we have said, to extend his reputation on the American continent and to confirm his extraordinary familiarity with American conditions. As soon as he was appointed Deputy Postmaster-General for America with Hunter, William Frank-

lin was appointed Comptroller of the Post-office. The post-office at Philadelphia he first conferred upon William Franklin, then upon Joseph Read, one of Deborah's relatives, and then upon Peter Franklin, Franklin's brother. Indeed, so long as there was a Franklin or a Read willing to enter the public service, Franklin's other fellow-countrymen had very little chance of filling any vacant post in the American Post-office. This was doubtless due not only to his clannishness but also to the fact that, as far as we can now judge, nepotism was a much more venial offence in the eyes of the public during the colonial era than now. Even now it may be doubted whether the disfavor with which it is regarded is prompted so much by its prejudicial tendency from a public point of view as by its tendency, from the point of view of the spoilsman, to interfere with the repeated use of office for partisan purposes.

The income upon which Franklin retired from business was the sum of one thousand pounds a year for eighteen years, which Hall agreed to pay him, the small salary, arising from the office of Postmaster at Philadelphia, and the income, supposed to be about seven hundred pounds a year, produced by his invested savings. When in England, in addition to the one thousand pounds a year, paid to him by Hall, which ended in the year 1766, and the income derived by him from invested savings, he received a salary of three hundred pounds a year from his office as Deputy Postmaster-General for America, until he was removed in 1774, and for briefer periods a salary of five hundred pounds a year from his office as Colonial Agent for Pennsylvania, and salaries of four hundred pounds, two hundred pounds and one hundred pounds as the Colonial Agent of Massachusetts, Georgia and New Jersey, respectively. With his removal from his office of Deputy Postmaster-General, all these agencies and the salaries attached to them came to an end. When the annuity paid to him by Hall ceased, his income was so

seriously curtailed that he was compelled, as we have seen, to remind Deborah of the fact. After his return from England in 1775, he was appointed the Postmaster-General of the United States at a salary of one thousand pounds a year.

For his public services in France, he was allowed at first a salary of five hundred pounds a year and his expenses, and subsequently, when his rank was advanced to that of ambassador, two thousand five hundred pounds a year. When he returned from France to America, he communicated to his old friend, Charles Thomson, the Secretary of Congress, his hope that Congress might be kind enough to recognize the value of his services and sacrifices in the American cause by granting him some small tract of land in the West. He saw, he said, that Congress had made a handsome allowance to Arthur Lee for his services to America in England before his appointment as Commissioner to France, though it had made none to the writer or to Mr. Bollan, who were also parties to these services. Moreover, Lee, on his return to America, as well as John Jay, had been rewarded by Congress with a good office. The letter, of course, made out an irrefragable case; for, if the United States had given the whole Northwest Territory to Franklin, his heirs and assigns forever, the gift would hardly have exceeded the value of his services. It was written just before the Old Congress gave way to the First Congress under the Federal Constitution, and nothing ever came of it. The conduct of the Old Congress to Franklin in other respects had been so ungenerous that it is hardly likely that it would have made any response to the appeal anyhow unless solicited by a more intriguing spirit than his.

The State of Georgia was more mindful of its obligations to him, and voted him the right to take up three thousand acres of land within its limits.

After his return from France, a great rise took place in

the value of real estate in Philadelphia, and his houses and lots reaped its benefits to a conspicuous degree. On Jan. 29, 1786, he wrote to Ferdinand Grand, "My own Estate I find more than tripled in Value since the Revolution"; and similar statements are to be found in other letters of his at this time.

At this period of his life, a considerable amount of his attention was given to the improvement of his property. On Apr. 22, 1787, in a letter to Ferdinand Grand, he said, "The three Houses which I began to build last year, are nearly finished, and I am now about to begin two others. Building is an Old Man's Amusement. The Advantage is for his Posterity."

When Franklin died, his estate consisted of ten houses in Philadelphia, and almost as many vacant lots, a pasture lot near Philadelphia, a farm near Burlington, New Jersey, a house in Boston, the right to the three thousand acres of land in Georgia, a tract of land on the Ohio, a tract of land in Nova Scotia, twelve shares of the capital stock of the Bank of North America and bonds of individuals in excess of eighteen thousand pounds. The value of his entire estate was supposed to be between two hundred and two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Under his management, the *Gazette* was probably the best newspaper produced in Colonial America. In its early history, it appeared first twice a week, and then weekly, and consisted of but a single sheet, which, when folded, was about 12 by 18 inches square. Parton is not accurate, as his own context shows, in stating that Franklin "originated the modern system of business-advertising." Other newspapers of the time, including Bradford's *Mercury*, contained advertisements for the recovery of runaway servants and slaves, and lost or stolen articles, and for the sale of different kinds of merchandise. When Franklin fled from Boston, his brother James advertised for another apprentice in the *Courant*. Nor is Parton

accurate, either, in stating that Franklin "invented the plan of distinguishing advertisements by means of little pictures, which he cut with his own hands." There were such cuts in Bradford's *Mercury* even before the *Gazette* was founded. The *Gazette* won a position of its own because its proprietor and editor brought to its issues that knowledge of human life and human nature and that combination of practical sagacity, humor and literary skill which he carried into everything. The latest advices of the day, foreign and domestic, which were tardy enough, extracts from the *Spectator* and other moral writers of the age, verses from contemporary poets, cuttings from the English newspapers, broad, obscene jokes, as unconscious of offence as the self-exposure of a child or an animal, all assembled with the instinctive eye to unity of effect, which is the most consummate achievement of journalistic art, made up the usual contents of the *Gazette*. Now, along with news items of local and outside interest, we have a humorous account of a lottery in England, by which, for the better increase of the King's subjects, all the old maids are to be raffled for; now some truculent flings at the Catholics, the *caput lupinum* of that age; now a hint to a delinquent subscriber that it was considerably in his power to contribute towards the happiness of his most humble obliged servant; now an exasperating intimation that the *Mercury* has been depredating upon the columns of its rival; now some little essay or dialogue from the pen of Franklin himself, good enough to be classed as literature. The open, kindly, yet shrewd, face, with the crow's-feet, furrowed by the incessant play of humor about the corners of its eyes, looks out at us from every page.

The editor of the *Gazette* sustains to his readers a relation as personal as that sustained by Poor Richard to his. He goes off to New Jersey to print some paper currency for that Colony, and he inserts this paragraph in the

Gazette: "The Printer hopes the irregular Publication of this Paper will be excused a few times by his Town Readers, on consideration of his being at Burlington with the press, labouring for the publick Good, to make Money more plentiful." The statement that a flash of lightning in Bucks County had melted the pewter buttons off the waistband of a farmer's breeches elicits the observation, "'Tis well nothing else thereabouts was made of pewter." When contributions by others failed him, he even wrote letters to himself under feigned names. "Printerum est errare," we are told, and then, under this announcement, Franklin, in another name, addresses the following facetious letter to himself:

Sir, As your last Paper was reading in some Company where I was present, these Words were taken Notice of in the Article concerning Governor Belcher (After which his Excellency, with the Gentlemen trading to New England, died elegantly at Pontack's). The Word died should doubtless have been dined, Pontack's being a noted Tavern and Eating house in London for Gentlemen of Condition; but this Omission of the Letter (n) in that Word, gave us as much Entertainment as any Part of your Paper. One took the Opportunity of telling us, that in a certain Edition of the Bible, the Printer had, where David says I am fearfully and wonderfully made, omitted the Letter (e) in the last Word, so that it was, I am fearfully and wonderfully mad; which occasion'd an ignorant Preacher, who took that Text, to harangue his Audience for half an hour on the Subject of Spiritual Madness. Another related to us, that when the Company of Stationers in England had the Printing of the Bible in their Hands, the Word (not) was left out of the Seventh Commandment, and the whole Edition was printed off with Thou shalt commit Adultery, instead of Thou shalt not, &c. This material Erratum induc'd the Crown to take the Patent from them which is now held by the King's Printer. The Spectator's Remark upon this Story is, that he doubts many of our modern Gentlemen have this faulty edition by 'em, and are not made sensible of the Mis-

take. A Third Person in the Company acquainted us with an unlucky Fault that went through a whole Impression of Common-Prayer Books; in the Funeral Service, where these Words are, We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, &c., the Printer had omitted the (c) in changed, and it read thus, We shall all be hanged, &c. And lastly, a Mistake of your Brother News-Printer was mentioned, in The Speech of James Prouse written the Night before he was to have been executed, instead of I die a Protestant, he has put it, I died a Protestant. Upon the whole you came off with the more favourable Censure, because your Paper is most commonly very correct, and yet you were never known to triumph upon it, by publickly ridiculing and exposing the continual Blunders of your Contemporary Which Observation was concluded by a good old Gentleman in Company, with this general just Remark, That whoever accustoms himself to pass over in Silence the Faults of his Neighbours, shall meet with much better Quarter from the World when he happens to fall into a Mistake himself; for the Satyrical and Censorious, whose Hand is against every Man, shall upon such Occasions have every Man's Hand against him.

This is an accusation of plagiarism made by Franklin against Bradford:

When Mr. Bradford publishes after us [he declared], and has Occasion to take an Article or two out of the *Gazette*, which he is always welcome to do, he is desired not to date his Paper a Day before ours, (as last Week in the Case of the Letter containing Kelsey's Speech, &c) lest distant Readers should imagine we take from him, which we always carefully avoid.

Bradford hit back as best he could. On one occasion he charged that the contract for printing paper money for the Province of New Jersey had been awarded to Franklin at a higher bid than that of another bidder. "Its no matter," he said, "its the Country's Money, and if the

Publick cannot afford to pay well, who can? Its proper to serve a Friend when there is an opportunity."

One of Franklin's favorite devices for filling up gaps in the *Gazette* was to have himself, in the guise of a correspondent, ask himself questions, and then answer them. "I am about courting a girl I have had but little acquaintance with; how shall I come to a knowledge of her faults, and whether she has the virtues I imagine she has," is one such supposititious question. "Commend her among her female acquaintance," is the ready-made answer. Another imaginary question was of this tenor: "Mr. Franklin: Pray let the prettiest Creature in this Place know (by publishing this), that if it was not for her Affectation she would be absolutely irresistible." Next week a flood of replies gushed out of the editor's pigeonholes. One ran thus:

"I cannot conceive who your Correspondent means by 'the prettiest creature' in this Place; but I can assure either him or her, that she who is truly so, has no Affectation at all."

And another ran thus:

"Sir, Since your last Week's Paper I have look'd in my Glass a thousand Times, I believe, in one way; and if it was not for the Charge of Affectation I might, without Partiality believe myself the Person meant."

At times we cannot but suspect that Franklin has deliberately created a sensation for the purpose of quickening the sale of the *Gazette*. For instance, a peruke maker in Second Street advertises that he will "leave off the shaving business after the 22nd of August next." Commenting on this advertisement, Franklin observes that barbers are peculiarly fitted for politics, for they are adept shavers and trimmers; and, when the angry peruke maker calls him to task for his levity, he replies that he cherishes no animosity at all towards him, and can only impute his feelings to a "Want of taste and relish for pieces of that force and

beauty which none but a University bred gentleman can produce."

On another occasion, when advertising the sailing of a ship, he added this N. B. of his own: "No Sea Hens, nor Black Gowns will be admitted on any terms." To such a degree were some of the clergy incensed by it that they withdrew their subscriptions; but it is not unlikely that in a day or so twice their number in scoffers were added to the subscription list of the young printer. At times the fooling is bald buffoonery.

On Thursday last [he informed his readers] a certain P-r ('tis not customary to give names at length on these occasions) walking carefully in clean clothes over some barrels of tar on Carpenter's Wharf, the head of one of them unluckily gave way, and let a leg of him in above the knee. Whether he was upon the Catch at that time, we can not say, but 'tis certain he caught a *Tar-tar*. 'Twas observed he sprang out again right briskly, verifying the common saying, as nimble as a Bee in a Tar barrel. You must know there are several sorts of bees: 'tis true he was no honey bee, nor yet a humble bee: but a *Boo-bee* he may be allowed to be, namely B. F.

Franklin was a publisher of books as well as a newspaper proprietor. Most of the books and pamphlets published by him were of a theological or religious nature, in other words books which, aside from the pecuniary profit of printing them, he was very much disposed to regard as no books at all. Others were of a description to serve the practical wants of a society yet simple in its structure, such as *The Gentlemen's Pocket Farrier* and *Every Man his Own Doctor, or the Poor Planter's Physician*. But some were of real note such as two little volumes of native American poetry, Colden's *Essay on the Iliac Passion*, which is said to have been the first American medical treatise, Cadwallader's *Essay on the West India Dry Gripes*, and James Logan's translation of

Cato's *Moral Distichs*, which Franklin regarded as his *chef d'œuvre*, and which is said to have been the first book in the Latin tongue to have been both translated and printed in America. Worthy of mention also are various publications on the subject of slavery, precursors of the endless succession a little later on of anti-slavery tracts, books and speeches, which anon became a mountain. The mercantile business, of which Franklin's stationery shop was the nucleus, was of a highly miscellaneous character. In addition to books and pamphlets printed by himself, he imported and sold many others including chapmen's books and ballads.

At the time I establish'd myself in Pennsylvania [he tells us in the *Autobiography*], there was not a good bookseller's shop in any of the Colonies to the southward of Boston. In New York and Philad'a the printers were indeed stationers; they sold only paper, etc., almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who lov'd reading were oblig'd to send for their books from England.

The spirit in which he imported the pamphlets sold by him is indicated in one of his letters to Strahan. "Let me have everything, good or bad, that makes a Noise and has a Run," he says. His stock of merchandise included everything usually sold at a stationer's shop such as good writing paper, choice writing parchment, cyphering slates and pencils, Holman's ink powders, ivory pocket books, pounce and pounce boxes, sealing wax, wafers, pencils, fountain pens, choice English quills, brass inkhorns, and sand glasses. There were besides "fine mezzotints, a great variety of maps, cheap pictures engraved on copper plate of all sorts of birds, beasts, fishes, fruits, flowers etc., useful to such as would learn to draw." Along with these things, and choice consignments of the Franklin Crown Soap, were vended

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articles almost as varied as the contents of a junkshop, such as the following:

very good sack at 6s per gallon, glaz'd fulling papers and bonnet-papers, very good lamp-black, very good chocolate, linseed oil, very good coffee, compasses and scales, Seneca rattlesnake root, with directions how to use it in the pleurisy &c., dividers and protractors, a very good second hand two-wheel chaise, a very neat, new fashion'd vehicle, or four wheel'd chaise, very convenient to carry weak or other sick persons, old or young, good Rhode Island cheese and codfish, quadrants, forestaffs, nocturnals, mariner's compasses, season'd murchantable boards, coarse and fine edgings, fine broad scarlet cloth, fine broad black cloth, fine white thread hose and English sale duck, very good iron stoves, a large horse fit for a chair or saddle, the true and genuine Godfrey's cordial, choice bohea tea, very good English saffron, New York Lottery tickets, choice makrel, to be sold by the barrel, a large copper still, very good spermacety, fine palm oyl, very good Temple spectacles and a new fishing net.

Another commodity in which Franklin dealt was the unexpired time of indentured or bond servants, who had sold their services for a series of years in return for transportation to America. This traffic is illustrated in such advertisements in the *Gazette* as these: "To be sold. A likely servant woman, having three years and a half to serve. She is a good spinner"; "To be sold. A likely servant lad about 15 years of age, and has 6 years to serve." And alas! the humanitarian, who strove so earnestly, during the closing years of his life, when he was famous and rich, and the President of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, to bring home the horrors of slavery to the Southern conscience, was himself what involved until the end utter social disrepute in the slaveholding South, that is to say, a negro-trader. "Some of these slaves," Paul Leicester Ford tells us in *The*

Many Sided Franklin, "he procured from New England where, as population grew in density, the need for them passed, leading to their sale in the colonies to the southward." The business was certainly a repulsive one, even when conducted by such a lover of the human species as Franklin. How far this is true the reader can judge for himself when he reads the following advertisements, which are but two of the many of the same kind that appeared in the *Gazette:*

To be sold a likely negro woman, with a man-child, fit for town or country business. Enquire of the printer hereof.

To be sold. A prime able young negro man, fit for laborious work, in town or country, that has had the small pox: As also a middle aged negro man, that has likewise had the small pox. Enquire of the printer hereof: Or otherwise they will be expos'd to sale by publick vendue, on Saturday the 11th of April next, at 12 o'clock, at the Indian-king, in Market Street.

While Franklin was printing pamphlets against slavery and selling negroes, and Deborah was stitching pamphlets and vending old rags, Mrs. Read, the mother of Deborah, was engaged in compounding and vending an ointment suited to conditions still graver than those for which the Franklin Crown Soap was intended. We can hardly doubt that this advertisement, which was published in the *Gazette*, was penned by the same hand which wrote the *Ephemera:*

The Widow Read, removed from the upper End of High Street to the *New Printing Office* near the Market, continues to make and sell her well-known Ointment for the ITCH, with which she has cured abundance of People in and about this City for many Years past. It is always effectual for that purpose, and never fails to perform the Cure speedily. It also kills or drives away all Sorts of Lice in once or twice using.

It has no offensive Smell, but rather a pleasant one; and may be used without the least Apprehension of Danger, even to a sucking Infant, being perfectly innocent and safe. Price 2 s. a Galleypot containing an Ounce; which is sufficient to remove the most inveterate Itch, and render the Skin clear and smooth.

The same advertisement informed the public that the Widow Read also continued to make and sell her excellent *Family Salve* or Ointment, for Burns or Scalds, (Price 1 s. an Ounce) and several other Sorts of Ointments and Salves as usual.

From this review of the business career of Franklin, it will be seen that the stairway, by which he climbed to pecuniary independence and his wider fame, though not long, was, in its earlier gradations, hewn step by step from the rock. From the printing office of Keimer to Versailles and the *salon* of Madame Helvétius was no primrose path. As long as the human struggle in its thousand forms, for subsistence and preferment, goes on, as long as from year to year youth continues to be rudely pushed over the edge of the nest, with no reliance except its own strength of wing, it is safe to say that the first chapters of the *Autobiography* will remain a powerful incentive to human hope and ambition.

CHAPTER III

Franklin as a Statesman

THE career of Franklin as a public official began in 1736, when he was appointed Clerk of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. In this position, he remained until his retirement from business precipitated so many political demands upon him that he had to give it up for still higher responsibilities.

The publick [he says in the *Autobiography*] now considering me as a man of leisure, laid hold of me for their purposes, every part of our civil government, and almost at the same time, imposing some duty upon me. The Governor put me into the commission of the peace; the corporation of the city chose me of the common council, and soon after an alderman; and the citizens at large chose me a burgess to represent them in Assembly.[1]

His legislative seat was all the more agreeable to him because he had grown tired as clerk of listening to debates in which he could take no part, and which were frequently so lifeless that for very weariness he had to amuse himself

[1] There is no evidence that, while he was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Franklin ever had occasion, as every member of an American State legislature is likely to have, to deal with a bill for the extermination of hawks and owls; but a skeleton sketch by his hand of his services as an assemblyman shows that he shared the fate of the ordinary member of an American State legislature in having a bill relating to dogs referred to a Committee of which he was a member.

with drawing magic squares or circles, or what not, as he sat at his desk. The office of justice of the peace he withdrew from by degrees, when he found that, to fill it with credit, more knowledge of the common law was requisite than he possessed, and, in this connection, the belief may be hazarded that his influence in Congress and the Federal Convention of 1787 would have been still greater, if he had been a better lawyer, and, therefore, more competent to cope in debate with contemporaries fitter than he was to discuss questions which, true to the time-honored Anglo-Saxon traditions, turned largely upon the provisions of charters and statutes. That he was lacking in fluency of speech we have, as we have seen, his own admission—a species of evidence, however, by no means conclusive in the case of a man so little given to self-praise as he was. But there is testimony to convince us that, as a debater, Franklin was, at least, not deficient in the best characteristic of a good debater, that of placing the accent upon the truly vital points of his case.

> I served [declares Jefferson] with General Washington in the legislature of Virginia, before the revolution, and, during it, with Dr. Franklin in Congress. I never heard either of them speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point, which was to decide the question. They laid their shoulders to the great points, knowing that the little ones would follow of themselves.

What John Adams has to say about Franklin as a legislator is manifestly the offspring of mere self-love. After taking a view of his own legislative activity through the highly magnifying lens, which he brought to bear upon everything relating to himself, he pictures Franklin in Congress as "from day to day, sitting in silence, a great part of his time fast asleep in his chair."

But whatever were the demerits of Franklin as a speaker, his influence was very great in every legislative assembly

in which he ever sat. To begin with, he had the kind of eloquence that gives point to his own saying, "Whose life lightens, his words thunder." Commenting in the latter part of his career to Lord Fitzmaurice upon the stress laid by Demosthenes upon action as the point of first importance in oratory, he said that he

> thought another kind of action of more importance to an orator, who would persuade people to follow his advice, viz. such a course of action in the conduct of life, as would impress them with an opinion of his integrity as well as of his understanding; that, this opinion once established, all the difficulties, delays, and oppositions, usually occasioned by doubts and suspicions, were prevented; and such a man, though a very imperfect speaker, would almost always carry his points against the most flourishing orator, who had not the character of sincerity.

In the next place, Franklin's rare knowledge and wisdom made him an invaluable counsellor for any deliberative gathering. He was the protagonist in the Pennsylvania Assembly of the Popular Party, in its contest with the Proprietary Party, and was for a brief time its Speaker. As soon as he returned from Europe, at the beginning of the Revolution, he was thrice honored by being elected to the Continental Congress, the Pennsylvania Assembly, and the Convention to frame a constitution for Pennsylvania. Besides appointing him Postmaster-General, Congress placed him upon many of its most important committees; the Assembly made him Chairman of its Committee of Safety, a post equivalent, for all practical purposes, to the executive headship of the Province; and the Convention made him its President. It is safe to say that, had there not been a Washington, even his extreme old age and physical infirmities would not have kept him from being the presiding officer of the Federal Convention of 1787 and the first President of the United States. The

intellect of Franklin was too solid to be easily imposed upon by mere glibness of speech. "Here comes the orator, with his flood of words and his drop of reason," remarks Poor Richard. Equally pointed is that other saying of his, "The worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise." But Franklin was fully alive to the splendid significance of human eloquence, when enlisted in the service of high-minded and far-seeing statesmanship. Speaking in a letter to Lord Stanhope of Lord Chatham's speech in support of his motion for the removal of the King's troops from Boston, he said, "Dr. F. is fill'd with admiration of that truly great Man. He has seen, in the course of Life, sometimes Eloquence without Wisdom, and often Wisdom without Eloquence; in the present Instance he sees both united; and both, as he thinks, in the highest Degree possible."

When Franklin took his seat in the Assembly, William Franklin was elected its clerk in his place; for heredity as well as consanguinity was a feature of the Franklin system of patronage. Once elected to the Assembly, he acquired a degree of popularity and influence that rendered his re-election for many years almost a matter of course. "My election to this trust," he says in the *Autobiography*, "was repeated every year for ten years, without my ever asking any elector for his vote, or signifying, either directly or indirectly, any desire of being chosen." So eager were his constituents to confer the honor upon him that they kept on conferring it upon him year after year, even when he was abroad.[1] He proved himself eminently worthy of this confidence. By nature and training, he was a true democrat, profoundly conservative at the core,

[1] Franklin, though in no sense a time server, rarely got out of touch with the majority simply because he always saw things as the best collective intelligence of the community is likely to see them—only a little sooner and more clearly. "Friend Joseph," one Quaker is said to have asked of an acquaintance, "didst thee ever know Dr. Franklin to be in a minority?"

but keenly sensitive to every rational and wholesome appeal to his liberal or generous instincts. He loved law and order, stable institutions, and settled forms and tendencies, rooted in the soil of transmitted wisdom and experience. He was too much of an Englishman to have any sympathy with hasty changes or rash innovations. Much as he loved France he could never have been drawn into such a delirious outburst as the French Revolution. He loved liberty as Hampden loved it, as Chatham loved it, as Gladstone loved it. John Wilkes, though in some respects an ignoble, was in other respects an indubitable champion of English freedom; yet Franklin utterly failed to see in him even a case for the application of his reminder to his daughter that sweet and clear waters come through very dirty earth. His happy nature and his faith in individual thrift sometimes made him slow to believe that masses of men had as much cause for political discontent as they claimed, and for such mob violence, as attended the career of Wilkes, of whom he speaks in one of his letters to his son as "an outlaw and an exile, of bad personal character, not worth a farthing," it was impossible for his deep-seated respect for law and order to have any toleration; though he did express on one occasion the remarkable conviction that, if George the Third had had a bad private character, and John Wilkes a good one, the latter might have turned the former out of his kingdom.

It is certain, however, that few men have ever detested more strongly than he did the baseness and meanness of arbitrary power. And he had little patience at the same time with conditions of any sort that rested upon mere precedent, or prescription. He welcomed every new triumph of science over inert matter, every fresh victory of truth over superstition, bigotry, or the unseeing eye, every salutary reform that vindicated the fitness of the human race for its destiny of unceasing self-advancement. His underlying instincts were firmly fixed in the ground,

but his sympathies reached out on every side into the free air of expanding human hopes and aspirations. In his faith in the residuary wisdom and virtue of the mass of men, he is more like Jefferson than any of his Revolutionary compeers. "The People seldom continue long in the wrong, when it is nobody's Interest to mislead them," he wrote to Abel James. The tribute, it must be confessed, is a rather equivocal one, as it is always somebody's interest to mislead the People, but the sanguine spirit of the observation pervades all his relations to popular caprice or resentment. Less equivocal was his statement to Galloway: "The People do not indeed always see their Friends in the same favourable Light; they are sometimes mistaken, and sometimes misled; but sooner or later they come right again, and redouble their former Affection." Few were the public men of his age who looked otherwise than askance at universal suffrage, but he was not one of them.

> Liberty, or freedom [he declared in his *Some Good Whig Principles*], consists in having *an actual share* in the appointment of those who frame the laws, and who are to be the guardians of every man's life, property, and peace; for the *all* of one man is as dear to him as the *all* of another; and the poor man has an *equal* right, but *more* need, to have representatives in the legislature than the rich one.

For similar reasons he was opposed to entails, and favored the application of the just and equal law of gavelkind to the division of intestate estates.

It was impossible for such a man as this not to ally himself with the popular cause, when he became a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly. At that time, the Proprietary Government of Pennsylvania had proved as odious to the people of the Province as the proprietary governments of South Carolina and the Jerseys had proved to the people of those Colonies. Almost from the time of the original

settlement, the relations between the Assembly and the Penns had been attended by mutual bickerings and reproaches. First William Penn had scolded the Assembly in a high key, then his sons; and, in resolution after resolution, the Assembly had, in true British fashion, stubbornly asserted the liberties and privileges of their constituents, and given the Proprietary Government, under thinly veiled forms of parliamentary deference, a Roland for its every Oliver. The truth was that a Proprietary Government, uniting as it did governmental functions, dependent for their successful exercise upon the popular faith in the disinterestedness of those who exercised them, with the selfish concerns of a landlord incessantly at loggerheads with his vendees and tenants over purchase money and quitrents, was utterly incompatible with the dignity of real political rule,[1] and hopelessly repugnant to the free English spirit of the Pennsylvanians. Under such circumstances, there could be no such thing as a true commonwealth; nor anything much better than a feudal fief. Political sovereignty lost its aspect of detachment and legitimate authority in the eyes of the governed, and wore the appearance of a mere organization for the transaction of private business. Almost as a matter of course, the Proprietaries came to think and speak of the Province as if it were as much their personal property as one of their household chattels, refusing, as Franklin said, to give their assent to laws, unless some private advantage was obtained, some profit got or unequal exemption gained for their estate, or some privilege wrested from the people; and almost, as a matter of course, the disaffected people of the Province sullenly resented a situation so galling to their pride and self-respect.

[1] "I believe it will in time be clearly seen by all thinking People that the Government and Property of a Province should not be in the same family. Tis too much weight in one scale." Letter from Franklin to Israel Pemberton, Mar. 19, 1759.

Franklin saw all this with his usual clearness. After conceding in his *Cool Thoughts* that it was not unlikely that there were faults on both sides, "every glowing Coal being apt to inflame its Opposite," he expressed the opinion that the cause of the contentions was

> radical, interwoven in the Constitution, and so become of the very Nature, of Proprietary Governments. And [he added] as some Physicians say, every Animal Body brings into the World among its original Stamina the Seeds of that Disease that shall finally produce its Dissolution; so the Political Body of a Proprietary Government, contains those convulsive Principles that will at length destroy it.

The Proprietary Government of Pennsylvania was bad enough in principle; it was made still worse by the unjust and greedy manner in which it was administered by Thomas and Richard Penn, who were the Proprietaries, when Franklin became a member of the Assembly. The vast estate of William Penn in Pennsylvania, consisting of some twenty-six million acres of land, held subject to the nominal obligation of the owner to pay to the King one fifth of such gold and silver as the Province might yield, descended upon the death of Penn to his sons John, Thomas and Richard, in the proportion of one half to John, as the eldest son, and in the proportion of one fourth each to Thomas and Richard. John died in 1746, after devising his one half share to Thomas; thus making Thomas the owner of three out of the four shares.[1] The political powers of the Proprietaries were exercised by a deputy-governor whose position was in the highest degree vexatious and perplexing. He held his office by appointment of the Proprietaries, who resided in England, and the mode in which he was to discharge his duties was prescribed by

[1] In 1768, the revenues of the Proprietaries from their Pennsylvania estates were estimated by Joseph Galloway to be not much short of one hundred thousand pounds.

rigid "instructions," issued to him by them. His salary, however, was derived from the Assembly, which was rarely at peace with the Proprietary Government. If he obeyed his instructions, he ran the risk of losing his salary; if he disobeyed them, he was certain to lose his place. Incredible as it may now seem, the main duty imposed upon him by his instructions was that of vetoing every tax bill enacted by the Assembly which did not expressly exempt all the located, unimproved and unoccupied lands of the Proprietaries, and all the quitrents, fines and purchase money out at interest, to which they were entitled, that is to say, the greater part of their immense estate. This was the axis about which the bitter controversy between the Popular and Proprietary parties, in which Franklin acquired his political training and reputation, revolved like one of the lurid waterspouts with which a letter that his correspondent John Perkins received from him has been illustrated. The Assembly insisted that they should not be required to vote money for the support of the Proprietary Government, unless the proprietary estate bore its proper share of the common burden. The Governor did not dare to violate his instructions for fear of being removed by his masters, and of being sued besides on the bond by which he had bound himself not to violate them. At times, the feud was so intense and absorbing, that, like a pair of gamecocks, too intent on their own deadly encounter to hear an approaching footstep, the combatants almost lost sight of the fact that, under the shelter of their dissensions, the Indian was converting the frontiers of Pennsylvania into a charred and blood-stained wilderness. Occasionally the Assembly had to yield the point with a reservation asserting that its action was not to be taken as a precedent, and once, when England as well as America was feeling the shock of Braddock's defeat, the pressure of public opinion in England was sufficient to coerce the Proprietaries into

adding five thousand pounds to the sum appropriated by the Assembly for the defence of the Province. But, as a general thing, there was little disposition on either side to compromise. The sharpness of the issue was well illustrated in the bill tendered by the Assembly to Governor Morris for his signature after Braddock's defeat. Both before, and immediately after that catastrophe, he had, in reliance upon the critical condition of the public safety, endeavored to drive the Assembly into providing for the defence of the Province without calling upon the proprietary estate for a contribution. The bill in question declared "that all estates, real and personal, were to be taxed, those of the proprietaries *not* excepted." "His amendment," says Franklin in his brief way, "was, for *not* read *only;* a small, but very material alteration."[1]

This dependence of the Governor upon the Assembly for his salary and the dependence of the Assembly upon the Governor for the approval of its enactments brought about a traffic in legislation between them which was one of the most disgraceful features of the Proprietary régime; though it became so customary that even the most honorable Governor did not scruple to engage in it. This traffic is thus described by Franklin in his stirring "Preface to the Speech of Joseph Galloway, Esq.":

> Ever since the Revenue of the Quitrents first, and after that the Revenue of Tavern-Licenses, were settled irrevocably on our Proprietaries and Governors, they have look'd on those Incomes as their proper Estate, for which they were under no Obligations to the People: And when they afterwards concurr'd in passing any useful Laws, they considered them as so many Jobbs, for which they ought to be particularly paid. Hence arose the Custom of Presents twice a Year to the Governors, at

[1] "The shocking news of the strange, unprecedented and ignominious defeat of General Braddock," William Franklin said, "had no more effect upon Governor Morris than the miracles of Moses had on the heart of Pharaoh."

the close of each Session in which Laws were past, given at the Time of Passing. They usually amounted to a Thousand Pounds per Annum. But when the Governors and Assemblies disagreed, so that Laws were not pass'd, the Presents were withheld. When a Disposition to agree ensu'd, there sometimes still remain'd some Diffidence. The Governors would not pass the Laws that were wanted, without being sure of the Money, even all that they call'd their Arrears; nor the Assemblies give the Money without being sure of the Laws. Thence the Necessity of some private Conference, in which mutual Assurances of good Faith might be receiv'd and given, that the Transactions should go hand in hand.

This system of barter prevailed even before Franklin became a member of the Assembly, and how fixed and ceremonious its forms sometimes were we can infer from what happened on one of the semi-annual market days during Governor Thomas' administration. Various bills were lying dormant in his hands. Accordingly the House ordered two of its members to call upon him and acquaint him that it had long "waited for his Result" on these bills, and desired to know when they might expect it. They returned and reported that the Governor was pleased to say that he had had the bills long under consideration, and "*waited the Result*" of the House. Then, after the House had resolved itself into a committee of the whole, for the purpose of taking the "Governor's support" into consideration, there was a further interchange of communications between the House and the Governor; the former reporting "some progress" to the Governor, and the Governor replying that, as he had received assurances of a "*good disposition,*" on the part of the House, he thought it incumbent upon him to show *the like* on his part by sending down the bills, which lay before him, without any amendment. The manifestation of a good disposition was not the same thing as an actual promise to approve the bills; so the wary assembly simply resolved that, on the

passage of such bills as then lay before the Governor, and of the Naturalization Bill, and such other bills as might be presented to him during the pending session, there should be paid to him the sum of five hundred pounds; and that, on the passage of the same bills, there should be paid to him the further sum of one thousand pounds for the current year's support. Agreeably with this resolution, orders were drawn on the Treasurer and Trustees of the Loan-Office, and, when the Governor was informed of the fact, he appointed a time for passing the bills which was done with one hand, while he received the orders in the other. Thereupon with the utmost politeness he thanked the House for the fifteen hundred pounds as if it had been a free gift, and a mere mark of respect and affection. "*I thank you*, Gentlemen," he said, "for this *Instance* of *your Regard;* which I am the more pleased with, as it gives an agreeable Prospect of *future Harmony* between me and the Representatives of the People."

Despicably enough, while this treaty was pending, the Penns had a written understanding with the Governor, secured by his bond, that they were to receive a share of all money thus obtained from the people whom they sought to load with the entire weight of taxation. Indeed, emboldened as Franklin said by the declining sense of shame, that always follows frequent repetitions of sinning, they later in Governor Denny's time had the effrontery to claim openly, in a written reply to a communication from the Assembly, with respect to their refusal to bear any part of the expenses entailed on the Province by the Indians, that the excess of these donatives over and above the salary of the Governor should belong to them. By the Constitution, they said, their consent was essential to the validity of the laws enacted by the People, and it would tend the better to facilitate the several matters, which had to be transacted with them, for the representatives of the People to show a regard to them and their interest. The

Assembly hotly replied that they hoped that they would always be able to obtain needful laws from the goodness of their sovereign without going to the market for them to a subject. But the hope was a vain one, and to that market, directly or indirectly, the People of Pennsylvania still had to go, for some time to come. To use Franklin's language, there was no other market that they could go to for the commodity that they wanted.

Do not, my courteous Reader [he exclaims with fine scorn in the "Preface to the Speech of Joseph Galloway, Esq."] take Pet at our Proprietary Constitution, for these our Bargain and Sale Proceedings in Legislation. 'Tis a happy Country where Justice, and what was your own before, can be had for Ready Money. 'Tis another Addition to the Value of Money, and of Course another Spur to Industry. Every Land is not so bless'd. There are Countries where the princely Proprietor claims to be Lord of all Property; where what is your own shall not only be wrested from you, but the Money you give to have it restor'd, shall be kept with it, and your offering so much, being a Sign of your being too Rich, you shall be plunder'd of every Thing that remain'd. These Times are not come here yet: Your present Proprietors have never been more unreasonable hitherto, than barely to insist on your Fighting in Defence of their Property, and paying the Expences yourselves; or if their estates must, (ah! *must*) be tax'd towards it, that the *best* of their Lands shall be tax'd no higher than the *worst* of yours.

Governor Hamilton, who succeeded Governor Thomas, so far departed from the vicious practice of buying and selling laws as to sign them without prepayment, but, when he observed that the Assembly was tardy in making payment, and yet asked him to give his assent to additional laws, before prior ones had been paid for, he stated his belief to it that as many useful laws had been enacted by him as by any of his predecessors in the same space of time, and added that, nevertheless, he had not understood

that any allowance had been made to him for his support, as had been customary in the Province. The hint proved effective, the money was paid and the bills were approved.

From the time that Franklin became a member of the Assembly until the time that the minor controversy between the Proprietary Party and the Popular Party in Pennsylvania was obscured by the larger controversy between the Crown and all the American Colonies, he was engaged in an almost uninterrupted struggle with the Proprietaries, first, for the annulment of their claim to exemption from taxation, and, secondly, for the displacement of their government by a Royal Government. If there was ever an interlude in this struggle, it was only because, in devising measures for the defence of the Province, a Proprietary Governor found it necessary, at some trying conjuncture, to rely upon the management of Franklin to quiet the Quakers, who constituted a majority of the Assembly and detested both war and the Proprietaries, or upon the general abilities and popularity of Franklin to strengthen his own feeble counsels. If there was any political tranquillity in the Province during this time, it was, to employ one of Franklin's own comparisons, only such tranquillity as exists in a naval engagement between two broadsides. On the one hand were ranged the official partisans and dependents of the Proprietary Government and other adherents of the kind, whose allegiance is likely to be won by the social prestige and political patronage of executive authority. To this faction, in the latter stages of the conflict, was added a large body of Presbyterians whose sectarian sympathies had been excited by the Scotch-Irish uprising against the Indians, of which we have previously spoken. On the other hand were ranged the Quakers, upon whom the burden of resisting the Proprietary encroachments upon the popular rights had mainly rested from the origin of the Province, and middle-class elements of the population whose views and

sympathies were not highly colored by any special influences. The task of preparing resolutions, addresses and remonstrances, voicing the popular criticism of the Proprietaries, was mainly committed to Franklin by the Assembly. It was with him, too, as the ablest and most influential representative of the popular interest that the various Proprietary Governors usually dealt.

We first find him high in favor with Governor Thomas and his Council at the time of the Association because of his activity, when still only Clerk of the Assembly, in providing for the defence of the Province and arousing a martial spirit in its people. This was the period when the Quaker found it necessary to help his conscience out a little with his wit, and when Franklin made good use of the principle that men will countenance many things with their backs that they will not countenance with their faces. The Quaker majority in the Assembly did not relish his intimacy at this time with the members of the Council who had so often trod on their punctilio about military expenditures, and it might have been pleased, he conjectured, if he had voluntarily resigned his clerkship; "but," he declares in the *Autobiography*, "they did not care to displace me on account merely of my zeal for the association, and they could not well give another reason."

Governor Hamilton became so sick of the broils, in which he was involved by the Proprietary instructions, that he resigned. His successor was the Governor Morris whose father loved disputation so much that he encouraged his children to practise it when he was digesting his dinner. Franklin met him at New York when he was on his way to Boston, and Morris was on his way to Philadelphia to enter upon his duties as Governor. So ready for a war of words was the new Governor that, when Franklin returned from Boston to Philadelphia, he and the House had already come to blows, and the conflict never ceased

as long as he remained Governor. In the conflict, Franklin was his chief antagonist. Whenever a speech or message of the Governor was to be answered, he was made a member of the Committee appointed to answer it, and by such committees he was invariably selected to draft the answer. "Our answers," he says, "as well as his messages, were often tart, and sometimes indecently abusive." But the Governor was at heart an amiable man, and Franklin, resolute as he was, when his teeth were fairly set, had no black blood in his veins. Though one might have imagined, he says, that he and the Governor could not meet without cutting throats, so little personal ill-will arose between them that they even often dined together.

One afternoon [he tells us in the *Autobiography*] in the height of this public quarrel, we met in the street. "Franklin," says he, "you must go home with me and spend the evening; I am to have some company that you will like"; and, taking me by the arm, he led me to his house. In gay conversation over our wine, after supper, he told us, jokingly, that he much admir'd the idea of Sancho Panza, who, when it was proposed to give him a government, requested it might be a government of *blacks*, as then, if he could not agree with his people, he might sell them. One of his friends, who sat next to me, says, "Franklin, why do you continue to side with these damn'd Quakers? Had you not better sell them? The Proprietor would give you a good price." "The Governor," says I, "has not yet *blacked* them enough." He, indeed, had laboured hard to blacken the Assembly in all his messages, but they wip'd off his colouring as fast as he laid it on, and plac'd it, in return, thick upon his own face; so that, finding he was likely to be negrofied himself, he, as well as Mr. Hamilton, grew tir'd of the contest, and quitted the Government.

All these disputes originated in the instructions given by the Proprietaries to their Governors not to approve any tax measure enacted by the Assembly that did not ex-

pressly exempt their estates; conduct which Franklin justly terms in the *Autobiography* "incredible meanness."

The ability of Governor Morris to keep on good terms with Franklin in spite of the perpetual wrangling between the Assembly and himself Franklin sometimes thought was due to the fact that the Governor was bred a lawyer and regarded him as simply the advocate of the Assembly and himself as simply the advocate of the Proprietaries. However this was, he sometimes called upon Franklin in a friendly way to advise with him on different points; and occasionally, though not often, Franklin tells us, took his advice. But when the miserable fugitives, who escaped from the *Aceldama* on the Monongahela, brought back to the settlements their awful tale of carnage and horror, and Dunbar and his rout were cravenly seeking the protection of those whom they should have protected, Governor Morris was only too glad to consult, and take the advice of, the strongest man on the American Continent, except the gallant Virginian, young in years, but from early responsibilities and hardships, as well as native wisdom and intrepidity, endowed with a calm judgment and tempered courage far beyond his years, whom Providence almost seemed to have taken under its direct guardianship for its future purposes on the day that Braddock fell. Later, when it appeared as if the Indians would carry desolation and death into the very bowels of Pennsylvania, the Governor was equally glad to place Franklin in charge of its Northwestern Frontier, and to thrust blank military commissions into his hands to be filled up by him as he pleased. And later still, when the desire of the Governor to consult with Franklin about the proper measures for preventing the desertion of the back counties of Pennsylvania had brought the latter home from the Northwestern Frontier, the Governor did not hesitate, in planning an expedition against Fort Duquesne, to offer Franklin a commission as general. If

Franklin had accepted the offer, we are justified, we think, in assuming that he would have won at least as high a degree of credit as that which he accorded to Shirley. "For tho' Shirley," he tells us in the *Autobiography*, "was not a bred soldier, he was sensible and sagacious in himself, and attentive to good advice from others, capable of forming judicious plans, and quick and active in carrying them into execution." No mean summary of the military virtues of Franklin himself as a citizen soldier. But Franklin knew the limitations of his training too well to be allured by such a deceitful honor. There were few civil tasks to which he was not equal, but, when it came to being a military commander, he had the good sense to make an admission like that which Shirley made to him. When a banquet was given to Lord Loudon by the city of New York, Shirley was present, though the occasion was due to the fact that the command previously held by him had just been transferred to Loudon. Franklin noticed that he was sitting in a very low seat. "They have given you, sir, too low a seat," he said. "No matter, Mr. Franklin," replied Shirley, "I find *a low seat* the easiest." When Governor Morris saw that, disputatious as he was, he was no match in that respect for the Assembly, he was succeeded by Governor Denny, who brought over with him from England the gold medal awarded by the Royal Society to Franklin for his electrical discoveries. This honor as well as the political experience of his predecessors was calculated to impress upon the Governor the importance of being on good terms with Franklin. At all events, when the medal was delivered by him to Franklin at a public dinner given to himself, after his arrival at Philadelphia, he added to the gift some very polite expressions of his esteem, and assured Franklin that he had long known him by reputation. After dinner, he left the diners with their wine, and took Franklin aside into another room, and told him that he had been advised by his friends in

England to cultivate a friendship with him as the man who was best able to give him good advice, and to make his task easy. Much also was said by the Governor about the good disposition of the Proprietary towards the Province and the advantage that it would be to everyone and to Franklin particularly if the long opposition to the Proprietary was abandoned, and harmony between him and the people restored. No one, said the Governor, could be more serviceable in bringing this about than Franklin himself, who might depend upon his services being duly acknowledged and recompensed. "The drinkers," the *Autobiography* goes on, "finding we did not return immediately to the table, sent us a decanter of Madeira, which the Governor made liberal use of, and in proportion became more profuse of his solicitations and promises."

To these overtures Franklin replied in a proper strain of mingled independence and good feeling, and concluded by expressing the hope that the Governor had not brought with him the same unfortunate instructions as his predecessors. The only answer that the Governor ever gave to this inquiry was given when he settled down to the duties of his office. It then became plain enough that he was under exactly the same instructions as his predecessors; the old ulcer broke out afresh, and Franklin's pen was soon again prodding Proprietary selfishness. But through it all he contrived to maintain the same relations of personal amity with Governor Denny that he had maintained with Governor Morris. "Between us personally," he says, "no enmity arose; we were often together; he was a man of letters, had seen much of the world, and was very entertaining and pleasing in conversation." But the situation, so far as the Province was concerned, was too grievous to be longer borne without an appeal for relief to the Crown. The Assembly had enacted a bill, appropriating the sum of sixty thousand pounds for the King's use, ten thousand

pounds of which were to be expended on Lord Loudon's orders, and the Governor, in compliance with his instructions, had refused to give it his approval. This brought things to a head, the House resolved to petition the King to override the instructions and Franklin was appointed its agent to go over to England and present the petition. His passage was engaged, his sea-stores were actually all on board, when Lord Loudon himself came over to Philadelphia for the express purpose of bringing about an accommodation between the jarring interests. The Governor and Franklin met him at his request, and opened their minds fully to him; Franklin revamping all the old popular arguments, so often urged by him, and the Governor pleading his instructions, the bond that he had given and the ruin that awaited him if he disregarded it. "Yet," says Franklin, "seemed not unwilling to hazard himself if Lord Loudoun would advise it." This his Lordship did not choose to do, though Franklin once thought that he had nearly prevailed on him to do it; and finally he entreated Franklin to use his influence with the Assembly to induce it to yield, promising, if it did, to employ unsparingly the King's troops for the defence of the frontiers of Pennsylvania, but stating that, if it did not, those frontiers must remain exposed to hostile incursion. The result was that the packet, in which Franklin engaged passage, sailed off with his sea-stores, while the parties were palavering, and the Assembly, after entering a formal protest against the duress, under which it gave way, abandoned its bill, and enacted another with the hateful exemption in it which was promptly approved by the Governor.

Franklin was now free to embark upon his voyage, whenever he could find a ship ready to sail, but, unfortunately for him, all the packets by which he could sail were at the beck of Lord Loudon, who was the most vacillating of human beings. When Franklin, before leaving Philadel-

phia, inquired of him the precise time at which a packet boat, that he said would be off soon, would sail, he replied: "I have given out that she is to sail on Saturday next; but I may let you know, *entre nous*, that if you are there by Monday morning, you will be in time, but do not delay longer." Because of detention at a ferry, Franklin did not reach New York before noon on Monday, but he was relieved, when he arrived, to be told that the packet would not sail until the next day. This was about the beginning of April. In point of fact, it was near the end of June when it got off. At the time of Franklin's arrival in New York, it was one of the two packets, that were being kept waiting in port for the dispatches, upon which his Lordship appeared to be always engaged. While thus held up, another packet arrived only to be placed under the same embargo. Each had a list of impatient passengers, and many letters and orders for insurance against war risks from American merchants, but, day after day, his Lordship, entirely unmindful of the impatience and anxiety that he was creating, sat continually at his desk, writing his interminable dispatches. Calling one morning to pay his respects, Franklin found in his ante-chamber Innis, a Philadelphia messenger, who had brought on a batch of letters to his Lordship from Governor Denny, and who told Franklin that he was to call the next day for his Lordship's answer to the Governor, and would then set off for Philadelphia at once. On the strength of this assurance, Franklin the same day placed some letters of his own for delivery in that city in Innis' hands. A fortnight afterwards, he met the messenger in the same ante-chamber. "So, you are soon return'd, Innis" he said. "*Return'd!*" replied Innis, "No, I am not *gone* yet." "How so?" "I have called here by order every morning these two weeks past for his lordship's letter, and it is not yet ready." "Is it possible, when he is so great a writer? for I see him constantly at his escritoire." "Yes," says

Innis, "but he is like St. George on the signs, *always on horseback, and never rides on.*" Indeed, so purely rotatory was all his Lordship's epistolary energy, unremitting as it seemed to be, that one of the reasons given by William Pitt for subsequently removing him was that "*the minister never heard from him, and could not know what he was doing.*" Finally, the three packets dropped down to Sandy Hook to join the British fleet there. Not knowing but that they might make off any day, their passengers thought it safest to board them before they dropped down. The consequence was that they found themselves anchored at Sandy Hook for about six weeks, "as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean," and driven to the necessity of consuming all their sea-stores and buying more. At length, when the fleet did weigh anchor, with his Lordship and all his army on board, bound for the reduction of Louisburg, the three packets were ordered to attend it in readiness to receive the dispatches which the General was still scribbling upon the element that was not more mutable than his own purposes. When Franklin had been five days out, his packet was finally released, and stood off beyond the reach of his Lordship's indefatigable pen, but the other two packets were still kept in tow by him all the way to Halifax, where, after exercising his men for some time in sham attacks on sham forts, he changed his mind about besieging Louisburg, and returned to New York with all his troops and the two packets and their passengers. In the meantime, the French and their savage friends had captured Fort George, and butchered many of the garrison after its capitulation. The captain of one of the two packets, that were brought back to New York, afterwards told Franklin in London that, when he had been detained a month by his Lordship, he requested his permission to heave his ship down and clear her bottom. He was asked how long that would require. He answered three days. His Lordship replied, "If you

can do it in one day, I give leave; otherwise not; for you must certainly sail the day after tomorrow." So he never obtained leave, though detained afterwards, from day to day, during full three months. No wonder that an irate passenger, who represented himself as having suffered considerable pecuniary loss, swore after he finally reached London in Franklin's presence, that he would sue Lord Loudon for damages.

As Oxenstiern's son was enjoined by his father to do, Franklin had gone out into the world and seen with what little wisdom it is ruled. "On the whole," he says in the *Autobiography*, "I wonder'd much how such a man came to be intrusted with so important a business as the conduct of a great army; but, having since seen more of the great world, and the means of obtaining, and motives for giving places, my wonder is diminished."

The *Autobiography* makes it evident enough that for Loudon Franklin came to entertain the heartiest contempt.[1] His Lordship's movements in 1757 he stigmatized as frivolous, expensive and disgraceful to the nation beyond conception. He was responsible, Franklin thought, for the loss of Fort George, and for the foundering of a large part of the Carolina fleet, which, for lack of notice from him, remained anchored in the worm-infested waters of Charleston harbor for three months, after he had raised his embargo on the exportation of provisions. Nor does Franklin hesitate to charge that this embargo, while laid on the pretence of cutting off the enemy from supplies, was in reality laid for the purpose of beating down the price of provisions in the interest of the contractors, in whose profits, it was suspected, that Loudon had a share.

[1] Franklin's first impressions of Lord Loudon were very different from his later ones. In a letter to Strahan from New York, dated July 27, 1756, he said: "I have had the honour of several conferences with him on our American affairs, and am extremely pleased with him. I think there can not be a fitter person for the service he is engaged in."

Not only did his Lordship decline, on the shallow pretext that he did not wish to mix his accounts with those of his predecessors, to give Franklin the order that he had promised him for the payment of the balance, still due him on account of Braddock's expedition, though liquidated by his own audit, but, when Franklin urged the fact that he had charged no commission for his services, as a reason why he should be promptly paid, his Lordship cynically replied, "O, Sir, you must not think of persuading us that you are no gainer; we understand better those affairs, and know that everyone concerned in supplying the army finds means, in the doing it, to fill his own pockets."

Franklin and his son arrived in London on July 27, 1757. Shortly after he had settled down in his lodgings, he called upon Dr. Fothergill, whose counsel he had been advised to obtain, and who thought that, before an application was made to the British Government, there should be an effort to reach an understanding with the Penns themselves. Then took place the interview between Franklin and Lord Granville, at which his Lordship, after some preliminary discourse, expressed this alarming opinion:

> You Americans have wrong ideas of the nature of your constitution; you contend that the King's instructions to his governors are not laws, and think yourselves at liberty to regard or disregard them at your own discretion. But those instructions are not like the pocket instructions given to a minister going abroad, for regulating his conduct in some trifling point of ceremony. They are first drawn up by judges learned in the laws; they are then considered, debated, and perhaps amended in Council, after which they are signed by the king. They are then, so far as they relate to you, the *law of the land*, for the King is the LEGISLATOR OF THE COLONIES.

The correctness of this opinion was combated by Franklin. He told his Lordship that this was new doc-

trine to him, and that he had always understood from the American charters that the colonial laws were to be enacted by the assemblies of the Colonies, and that, once enacted and assented to by the King, the King could not repeal or alter them, and that, as the colonial assemblies could not make laws for themselves without his assent, so he could not make laws for them without their assent. The great man's reply was as brief as a great man's reply is only too likely to be when his opinions are questioned by his inferiors. It was merely that Franklin was totally mistaken. Franklin did not think so, and, concerned for fear that Lord Granville might be but expressing the sentiment of the Court, he wrote down what had been said to him as soon as he returned to his lodgings. The utterance reminded him that some twenty years before a bill had been introduced into Parliament by the ministry of that time containing a clause, intended to make the King's instructions laws in the Colonies, but that the clause had been stricken out of it by the House of Commons. For this, he said, the Colonies adored the Commons, as their friends and the friends of liberty, until it afterwards seemed as if they had refused the point of sovereignty to the King only that they might reserve it for themselves.

A meeting between the Proprietaries and Franklin was arranged by Doctor Fothergill. It assumed the form that such meetings are apt to assume, that is of mutual professions of an earnest desire to agree, repetition of the old antagonistic reasonings and a disagreement as stubborn as before. However, it was agreed that Franklin should reduce the complaints against the Proprietaries to writing, and that the Proprietaries were to consider them. When the paper was drawn, they submitted it to their solicitor, Ferdinand John Paris, who had represented them in the celebrated litigation between the Penns and the Lords Baltimore over the boundary line between Pennsylvania

and Maryland, and had written all their papers and messages in their disputes with the Pennsylvania Assembly. "He was," says Franklin, "a proud, angry man, and as I had occasionally in the answers of the Assembly treated his papers with some severity, they being really weak in point of argument and haughty in expression, he had conceived a mortal enmity to me." With Paris, Franklin refused to discuss the points of his paper, and the Proprietaries then, on the advice of Paris, placed it in the hands of the Attorney- and Solicitor-Generals for their opinion and advice. By them no answer was given for nearly a year, though Franklin frequently called upon the Proprietaries for an answer only to be told that they had not yet received the opinion of their learned advisers. What the opinion was when it was finally rendered the Proprietaries did not let Franklin know, but instead addressed a long communication, drawn and signed by Paris, to the Assembly, reciting the contents of Franklin's paper, complaining of its lack of formality as rudeness, and justifying their conduct. They would be willing, they said, to compose the dispute, if the Assembly would send out *some person of candor* to treat with them. Franklin supposed that the incivility imputed to him consisted in the fact that he had not addressed the Proprietaries by their assumed title of True and Absolute Proprietaries of the Province of Pennsylvania.

The letter of the Proprietaries was not answered by the Assembly. While they were pretending to treat with Franklin, Governor Denny had been unable to withstand the pressure of his situation, and, at the request of Lord Loudon, had approved an act subjecting the estates of the Penns to taxation. When this Act was transmitted to England, the Proprietaries, upon the advice of Paris, petitioned the King to withhold his assent from it, and, when the petition came on for hearing, the parties were represented by counsel. On the one hand it was con-

tended that the purpose of the Act was to impose an oppressive burden upon the Proprietary estates, and that the assessment under it would be so unequal because of the popular prejudice against the Penns that they would be ruined. To this it was replied that the Act was not conceived with any such purpose, and would not have any such effect, that the assessors were honest and discreet men under oath, and that any advantage that might inure to them individually from over-assessing the property of the Proprietaries would be too trifling to induce them to perjure themselves. It was also urged in opposition to the petition that the money, for which the Act provided, had been printed and issued, and was now in the hands of the inhabitants of the Province, and would be deprived of all value, to their great injury, if the Act did not receive the royal assent merely because of the selfish and groundless fears of the Proprietaries. At this point, Lord Mansfield, one of the counsel for the Proprietaries, led Franklin off into a room nearby, while the other lawyers were still pleading, and asked him if he was really of the opinion that the Proprietary estate would not be unfairly taxed if the Act was executed. "Certainly," said Franklin. "Then," said he, "you can have little objection to enter into an engagement to assure that point." "None at all," replied Franklin. Paris was then called in, and, after some discussion, a paper, such as Lord Mansfield suggested, was drawn up and signed by Franklin and Mr. Charles, who was the agent of Pennsylvania for ordinary purposes, and the law was given the royal assent with the further engagement, upon the part of Franklin and Mr. Charles, that it should be amended in certain respects by subsequent legislation. This legislation, however, the Assembly afterwards declined to enact when a committee, appointed by it, upon which it was careful to place several close friends of the Proprietaries, brought in an unanimous report stating that the yearly tax levied before the order

of the Council reached Pennsylvania had been imposed with perfect fairness as between the Proprietaries and the other tax-payers.

In the most important respect, therefore, Franklin's mission to England had resulted in success. The principle was established by the Crown that the estate of the Proprietaries was subject to taxation equally with that of the humblest citizen of Pennsylvania; and the credit of the paper money, then scattered throughout the province, was saved. The Assembly rewarded its servant, when he returned to Pennsylvania, with its formal thanks and the sum of three thousand pounds. He responded in the happy terms which he always had at his command on occasions of this sort. "He made answer," says the official report, "that he was thankful to the House, for the very handsome and generous Allowance they had been pleased to make him for his Services; but that the Approbation of this House was, in his Estimation, far above every other kind of Recompense."

The Proprietaries punished their servant, Governor Denny, by removing him and threatening him with suit for the breach of his bond, but it is a pleasure to be told in the *Autobiography* that his position was such that he could despise their threats.

While the duel was going on between the Proprietaries and the Assembly, Franklin had some significant things at times to say about it in his familiar letters. As far as we can see, his political course, during this period, was entirely candid and manly. He was on agreeable personal terms with all the colonial governors, he seems to have cherished an honest desire to be helpful to the Proprietaries, so far as their own illiberality and folly would allow him to be, and it is very plain that he was not without the feeling that the demands of the Popular Party itself were occasionally immoderate. He was quite willing for the sake of peace to concede anything except the essential

points of the controversy, but when it came to these he was immovable as men of his type usually are when they realize that a claim upon them is too unjust or exorbitant even for their pacific temper.

I am much oblig'd to you for the favourable Light you put me in, to our Proprietor, as mention'd in yours of July 30 [he wrote to Peter Collinson in 1754], I know not why he should imagine me not his Friend, since I cannot recollect any one Act of mine that could denominate me otherwise. On the contrary if to concur with him, so far as my little Influence reach'd in all his generous and benevolent Designs and Desires of making his Province and People flourishing and happy be any Mark of my Respect and Dutyful Regard to him, there are many who would be ready to say I could not be suppos'd deficient in such Respect. The Truth is I have sought his *Interest* more than his *Favour;* others perhaps have sought both, and obtain'd at least the latter. But in my Opinion great Men are not always best serv'd by such as show on all Occasions a blind Attachment to them: An Appearance of Impartiality in general gives a Man sometimes much more Weight when he would serve in particular instances.

To the friend to whom these words were written Franklin was disposed to unbosom himself with unusual freedom, and, in the succeeding year, in another letter to Collinson, he used words which showed plainly enough that he thought that the Assembly too was at times inclined to indulge in more hair-splitting and testiness than was consistent with the public welfare.

You will see [he said] more of the same Trifling in these Votes in both sides. I am heartily sick of our present Situation; I like neither the Governor's Conduct, nor the Assembly's; and having some Share in the Confidence of both, I have endeavour'd to reconcile 'em but in vain, and between 'em they make me very uneasy. I was chosen last Year in my Absence and was not at the Winter Sitting when the House sent home that Address to the King, which I am afraid was

both ill-judg'd and ill-tim'd. If my being able now and then to influence a good Measure did not keep up my Spirits I should be ready to swear never to serve again as an Assembly Man, since both Sides expect more from me than they ought, and blame me sometimes for not doing what I am not able to do, as well as for not preventing what was not in my Power to prevent. The Assembly ride restive; and the Governor tho' he spurs with both heels, at the same time reins in with both hands, so that the Publick Business can never move forward, and he remains like St. George on the Sign, Always a Horseback and never going on. Did you never hear this old Catch?

Their was a mad Man—He had a mad Wife,
And three mad Sons beside;
And they all got upon a mad Horse
And madly they did ride.

'Tis a Compendium of our Proceedings and may save you the Trouble of reading them.

In a still later letter to the same correspondent, Franklin asserted that there was no reason for excluding Quakers from the House, since, though unwilling to fight themselves, they had been brought to unite in voting the sums necessary to enable the Province to defend itself. Then, after referring to the defamation, that was being heaped upon him by the Proprietary Party, in the place of the court paid to him when he had exerted himself to secure aids from the House for Braddock and Shirley, he said, "Let me know if you learn that any of their Slanders reach England. I abhor these Altercations and if I did not love the Country and the People would remove immediately into a more quiet Government, Connecticut, where I am also happy enough to have many Friends."

However, there was too much fuel for the fire to die down. The claim of the Proprietaries to exemption from taxation was only the most aggravated result of their

efforts, by their instructions to their Governors, to shape the legislation of the Province in accordance with their own personal aims and pecuniary interests instead of in the spirit of the royal charter, which gave to William Penn, and his heirs, and his, or their, deputies or lieutenants, free, full and absolute power, for the good and happy government of Pennsylvania, to make and enact any laws, according to their best discretion, by and with the advice, assent and approbation of the freemen of the said country, or of their delegates or deputies. In the report of the Committee of Aggrievances of the Assembly, drawn by Franklin, the case of the freemen of the Province against the Penns, which led to Franklin's first mission to England, is clearly stated. They are arraigned not only for seeking to exempt the bulk of their estate from the common burden of taxation, but also, apart from this, for stripping, by their instructions, their governors, and thereby the People themselves, of all real discretion in fixing by legislation the measure and manner in which, and the time at which, aids and supplies should be furnished for the defence of the Province. They had even, the report charged, prohibited their governors, by their instructions, from assenting to laws disposing of interest arising from the loan of bills of credit or money raised by excise taxes—forms of revenue to which the Proprietary estate did not contribute at all—unless the laws contained a clause giving their governors the right to negative a particular application of the sums. Another grievance was the issuance by the governor of commissions to provincial judges, to be held during the will and pleasure of the governors instead of during good behavior, as covenanted by William Penn—a practice which gave the Proprietaries control of the judicial as well as the executive Branch of the provincial government.

For a time, after Franklin returned to Pennsylvania in 1762, there was something like peace between the Proprietaries and the people. When a nephew of Thomas Penn

was appointed governor, the Assembly accepted him as a family pledge of restored good feeling.

> The Assembly [Franklin wrote to Dr. Fothergill] received a Governor of the Proprietary family with open arms, addressed him with sincere expressions of kindness and respect, opened their purses to them, and presented him with six hundred pounds; made a Riot Act and prepared a Militia Bill immediately, at his instance, granted supplies, and did everything that he requested, and promised themselves great happiness under his administration.

And no governor was ever so dependent upon the good will of the Assembly. It was during his administration that the Scotch-Irish inhabitants of the frontier, inflamed by Indian outrages, imbrued their hands in the blood of the Conestoga Indians, and, so far from being intimidated by the public proclamations issued by the Governor for their arrest and punishment, marched to the very threshold of Philadelphia itself with the purpose of destroying the Moravian Indians huddled there in terror of their lives. The whole Province outside of the City of Philadelphia was given over to lawlessness and disorder. In the contagious excitement of the hour, a considerable portion of its population even believed that the Quakers had gained the friendship of the Indians by presents, supplied them secretly with arms and ammunition, and engaged them to fall upon and kill the whites on the Pennsylvania frontier. Under these circumstances, the Governor simply did what Governor Morris and Governor Denny had been compelled to do before him, namely, call in the aid of the man who could in a letter to Peter Collinson truthfully sum up all that there was in the military demonstration which angered Thomas Penn so deeply with the simple utterance, "The People happen to love me." The whole story was told by Franklin to Dr. Fothergill in the letter from which we have just quoted.

More wonders! You know that I don't love the Proprietary and that he does not love me. Our totally different tempers forbid it. You might therefore expect that the late new appointments of one of his family would find me ready for opposition. And yet when his nephew arrived, our Governor, I considered government as government, and paid him all respect, gave him on all occasions my best advice, promoted in the Assembly a ready compliance with everything he proposed or recommended, and when those daring rioters, encouraged by general approbation of the populace, treated his proclamation with contempt, I drew my pen in the cause; wrote a pamphlet (that I have sent you) to render the rioters unpopular; promoted an association to support the authority of the Government and defend the Governor by taking arms, signed it first myself, and was followed by several hundreds, who took arms accordingly. The Governor offered me the command of them, but I chose to carry a musket and strengthen his authority by setting an example of obedience to his order. And would you think it, this proprietary Governor did me the honour, in an alarm, to run to my house at midnight, with his counsellors at his heels, for advice, and made it his head-quarters for some time. And within four and twenty hours, your old friend was a common soldier, a counsellor, a kind of dictator, an ambassador to the country mob, and on his returning home, nobody again. All this has happened in a few weeks.

With the retirement of the backwoodsmen from Philadelphia to their homes, sprang up one of the angriest factional contests that Pennsylvania had ever known. Every malignant passion, political or sectarian, that lurked in the Province was excited into the highest degree of morbid life. The Presbyterians, the Churchmen, even some of the Quakers, acclaimed the Paxton Boys as instruments of a just vengeance, and they constituted a political force, which the Governor was swift to utilize for the purpose of strengthening his party. He dropped all efforts to apprehend the murderers of the Conestoga Indians, granted

a private audience to the insurgents, and accused the Assembly of disloyalty, and of encroaching upon the prerogatives of the Crown, only because it had been presumptuous enough to make an appointment to a petty office in a bill tendered to him for his assent. It was during his administration, too, that the claim was made that, even if the Proprietary estate had been subjected to taxation by the Lords in Council, under the terms of one of the amendments, proposed by them, "*the best and most valuable*," of the Proprietary lands "should be tax'd no higher than the *worst and least valuable* of the People's."

When the conflict was reopened, the Assembly boldly brought it to an issue. One of its committees, with Franklin at its head, reported a series of resolutions censuring the proprietaries, condemning their rule as too weak to maintain its authority and repress disorder, and petitioning the King to take over the Government of the Province, after such compensation to the Proprietaries as was just. The Assembly then adjourned to sound the temper of their constituents, and their adjournment was the signal for a pamphlet war attended by such a hail of paper pellets as rarely marked any contest so early in the history of the American Colonies. Among the best of them was the pamphlet written by Franklin, and entitled *Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of our Public Affairs*, which has already been mentioned, and which denounced in no uncertain terms the "insolent Tribunitial VETO," with which the Proprietaries were in the habit of declaring that nothing should be done, unless their private interests in certain particulars were served.

On May 14, 1764, the Assembly met again, and was soon deeply engaged in a debate as to whether an address should be sent to the King, praying the abolition of the Proprietary Government. Long did the debate last; Joseph Galloway making the principal argument in support of the proposition, and John Dickinson the principal one

against it. When the vote was taken, the affirmative prevailed, but, as Isaac Norris, who had been a member of the body for thirty years, and its speaker for fifteen, was about to be bidden by it to sign the address, he stated that, since he did not approve it, and yet would have to sign it as speaker, he hoped that he might have time to draft his objections to it. A short recess ensued, and when the members convened again, Norris sent word that he was too sick to be present, and requested that another person should be chosen as speaker. The choice of the body then fell upon Franklin, who immediately signed the paper.

The next sitting of the Assembly was not to be held until the succeeding October, and before that time the annual election for members of the Assembly was to take place. For the purpose of influencing public opinion, Dickinson, upon its adjournment, published his speech with a long preface by Dr. William Smith. Galloway followed suit by publishing his speech with a long preface by Franklin. This preface is one of Franklin's masterpieces, marked it is true by some quaint conceits and occasional relaxations of energy, but full of power and withering sarcasm. Preceded by such a lengthy and brilliant preface, Galloway must have felt that his speech had little more than the secondary value of an appendix. With the consummate capacity for pellucid statement, which was one of Franklin's most remarkable gifts, it narrated the manner in which the practice of buying legislation from the Proprietaries had been pursued. With equal force and ingenuity, it demonstrated that five out of the six amendments, proposed by the Lords in Council to the Act, approved by Governor Denny, did not justify the charge that the circumstances, in which they originated, involved any real injustice to the Proprietaries, and that the sixth, which forbade the tender to the Proprietaries of paper bills of fluctuating value, in payment of debts payable to them, under the terms of special

contracts, in coin, if a measure of justice to them, would be also a measure of justice to other creditors in the same situation, who were not mentioned in the amendment.

Referring to the universal practice in America of making such bills a legal tender and the fact that the bills in question would have been a legal tender as respects the members of the Assembly and their constituents as well as the Proprietaries, Franklin's preface glows like an incandescent furnace in these words:

> But if he (the reader) can not on these Considerations, quite excuse the Assembly, what will he think of those *Honourable* Proprietaries, who when Paper Money was issued in their Colony for the Common Defence of their vast Estates, with those of the People, and who must therefore reap, at least, equal Advantages from those Bills with the People, could nevertheless *wish* to be exempted from their Share of the unavoidable Disadvantages. Is there upon Earth a Man besides, with any Conception of what is honest, with any Notion of Honor, with the least Tincture in his Veins of the Gentleman, but would have blush'd at the Thought; but would have rejected with Disdain such undue Preference, if it had been offered him? Much less would he have struggled for it, mov'd Heaven and Earth to obtain it, resolv'd to ruin Thousands of his Tenants by a Repeal of the Act, rather than miss of it, and enforce it afterwards by an audaciously wicked Instruction, forbidding Aids to his King, and exposing the Province to Destruction, unless it was complied with. And yet,—these are *Honourable Men*. . . . Those who study Law and Justice, as a Science [he added in an indignant note] have established it a Maxim in Equity, "Qui sentit commodum, sentire debet et onus." And so consistent is this with the *common* Sense of Mankind, that even our lowest untaught Coblers and Porters feel the Force of it in their own Maxim, (which *they* are *honest enough* never to dispute) "Touch Pot, touch Penny."

Other passages in the Preface were equally scorching. Replying to the charge of the Proprietaries that the Quaker

Assembly, out of mere malice, because they had conscientiously quitted the Society of Friends for the Church, were wickedly determined to ruin them by throwing the entire burden of taxation on them, Franklin had this to say:

How foreign these Charges were from the Truth, need not be told to any Man in *Pennsylvania*. And as the Proprietors knew, that the Hundred Thousand Pounds of paper money, struck for the defence of their enormous Estates, with others, was actually issued, spread thro' the Country, and in the Hands of Thousands of poor People, who had given their Labor for it, how base, cruel, and inhuman it was, to endeavour by a Repeal of the Act, to strike the Money dead in those Hands at one Blow, and reduce it all to Waste Paper, to the utter Confusion of all Trade and Dealings, and the Ruin of Multitudes, merely to avoid paying their own just Tax!—Words may be wanting to express, but Minds will easily conceive, and never without Abhorrence!

But fierce as these attacks were, they were mild in comparison with the shower of stones hurled by Franklin at the Proprietaries in the Preface in one of those lapidary inscriptions which were so common in that age. The prefacer of Dickinson's Speech had inserted in his introduction a lapidary memorial of William Penn made up of tessellated bits of eulogy, extracted from the various addresses of the Assembly itself. This gave Franklin a fine opportunity to retort in a similar mosaic of phrases and to contrast the meanness of the sons with what the Assembly had said of the father.

That these Encomiums on the Father [he said] tho' sincere, have occurr'd so frequently, was owing, however, to two Causes; first, a vain Hope the Assemblies entertain'd, that the Father's Example, and the Honors done his Character, might influence the Conduct of the Sons; secondly, for that in attempting to compliment the Sons on their own Merits, there was always found an extreme Scarcity of Matter. Hence *the Father, the honored and honorable Father*, was so often

repeated, that the Sons themselves grew sick of it; and have been heard to say to each other with Disgust, when told that A, B, and C. were come to wait upon them with Addresses on some public Occasion, "*Then I suppose we shall hear more about our Father.*" So that, let me tell the Prefacer, who perhaps was unacquainted with this Anecdote, that if he hop'd to curry more Favor with the Family, by the Inscription he has fram'd for that great Man's Monument, he may find himself mistaken; for,—there is too much in it of *our Father.*

If therefore, he would erect a Monument to the Sons, the Votes of Assembly, which are of such Credit with him, will furnish him with ample Materials for his Inscription.

To save him Trouble, I will essay a Sketch for him, in the Lapidary Style, tho' mostly in the Expressions, and everywhere in the Sense and Spirit of the Assembly's Resolves and Messages.

Be this a Memorial
Of T– and R– P–,
P– of P,–
Who, with Estates immense,
Almost beyond Computation,
When their own Province,
And the whole *British* Empire
Were engag'd in a bloody and most expensive War,
Begun for the Defence of those Estates,
Could yet meanly desire
To have those very Estates
Totally or Partially
Exempted from Taxation,
While their Fellow-Subjects all around them, Groan'd
Under the Universal Burthen.
To gain this Point,
They refus'd the necessary Laws
For the Defence of their People,
And suffer'd their Colony to welter in its Blood,
Rather than abate in the least
Of these their dishonest Pretensions.
The Privileges granted by their Father

Wisely and benevolently
To encourage the first Settlers of the Province,
They,
Foolishly and cruelly,
Taking Advantage of public Distress,
Have extorted from the Posterity of those Settlers;
And are daily endeavouring to reduce them
To the most abject Slavery:
Tho' to the Virtue and Industry of those People
In improving their Country,
They owe all that they possess and enjoy.
A striking Instance
Of human Depravity and Ingratitude;
And an irrefragable Proof,
That Wisdom and Goodness
Do not descend with an Inheritance;
But that ineffable Meanness
May be connected with unbounded Fortune.

It may well be doubted whether any one had ever been subjected to such overwhelming lapidation as this since the time of the early Christian martyrs.

There are many other deadly thrusts in the Preface, and nowhere else are the issues between the Proprietaries and the People so clearly presented, but the very completeness of the paper renders it too long for further quotation.

Franklin, however, was by no means allowed to walk up and down the field, vainly challenging a champion to come out from the opposing host and contend with him. At his towering front the missiles of the Proprietary Party were mainly directed. Beneath one caricature of him were these lines:

"Fight dog, fight bear! You're all my friends:
By you I shall attain my ends,
For I can never be content
Till I have got the government.
But if from this attempt I fall,
Then let the Devil take you all!"

Another writer strove in his lapidary zeal fairly to bury Franklin beneath a whole cairn of opprobrious accusations, consuming nine pages of printed matter in the effort to visit his political tergiversation, his greed for power, his immorality and other sins, with their proper deserts, and ending with this highly rhetorical apostrophe:

> "Reader, behold this striking Instance of
> Human Depravity and Ingratitude;
> An irrefragable Proof
> That neither the Capital services
> of *Friends*
> Nor the attracting Favours of the Fair,
> Can fix the Sincerity of a Man,
> *Devoid of Principles* and
> Ineffably mean:
> Whose ambition is
> POWER,
> And whose intention is
> TYRANNY."

The illegitimacy of William Franklin, of course, was freely used during the conflict as a means of paining and discrediting Franklin. In a pamphlet entitled, *What is sauce for a Goose is also Sauce for a Gander*, the writer asserted that the mother of William was a woman named Barbara, who worked in Franklin's house as a servant for ten pounds a year, that she remained in this position until her death and that Franklin then stole her to the grave in silence without pall, tomb or monument. A more refined spirit, which could not altogether free itself from the undertow of its admiration for such an extraordinary man, penned these lively lines entitled, "Inscription on a Curious Stove in the Form of An Urn, Contrived in such a Manner As To Make The Flame Descend Instead of Rising from the Fire, Invented by Dr. Franklin."

"Like a Newton sublimely he soared
To a summit before unattained,
New regions of science explored
And the palm of philosophy gained.

"With a spark which he caught from the skies
He displayed an unparalleled wonder,
And we saw with delight and surprise
That his rod could secure us from thunder.

"Oh! had he been wise to pursue
The track for his talents designed,
What a tribute of praise had been due
To the teacher and friend of mankind.

"But to covet political fame
Was in him a degrading ambition,
The spark that from Lucifer came
And kindled the blaze of sedition.

"Let candor then write on his urn,
Here lies the renowned inventor
Whose fame to the skies ought to burn
But inverted descends to the centre."

The election began at nine o'clock in the morning on October 1, 1764. Franklin and Galloway headed the "Old Ticket," and Willing and Bryan the "New." The latter ticket was supported by the Dutch Calvinists, the Presbyterians and many of the Dutch Lutherans and Episcopalians; the former by the Quakers and Moravians and some of the McClenaghanites. So great was the concourse of voters that, until midnight, it took fifteen minutes for one of them to work his way from the end of the line of eager electors to the polling place. Excitement was at white heat, and, while the election was pending, hands were busy scattering squibs and campaign appeals in English and German among the crowd. Towards three the next morning, the new-ticket partisans moved

that the polls be closed, but the motion was opposed by their old-ticket foes, because they wished to bring out a reserve of aged or lame retainers who could not stand long upon their feet. These messengers were dispatched to bring in such retainers from their homes in chairs and litters, and, when the new-ticket men saw the success, with which the old-ticket men were marshalling their recruits, they, too, began to scour the vicinage for votes, and so successful were the two parties in mobilizing their reserves that the polls did not close until three o'clock in the afternoon of the second day. Not until the third day were the some 3900 real and fraudulent votes cast counted; and, when the count was over, it was found that Franklin and Galloway had been defeated. "Franklin," said an eye-witness of the election, "died like a philosopher. But Mr. Galloway agonized in death like a mortal deist, who has no hopes of a future life."

As for Franklin, his enemies had simply kicked him upstairs. A majority of the persons returned as elected belonged to his faction, and, despite the indignant eloquence of Dickinson, who declared him to be the most bitterly disliked man in Pennsylvania, the Assembly, by a vote of nineteen to eleven, selected him as the agent of the Province to go over to England, and assist Richard Jackson, its standing agent, in "representing, soliciting and transacting the affairs" of the Province for the ensuing year.

The minority protested, and moved that its protest be spread upon the minutes, and, when this motion was denied, it published its remonstrance in the newspapers. This act provoked a pamphlet in reply from Franklin entitled *Remarks on a Late Protest.* Though shorter it is as good, as far as it goes, as the preface to Galloway's speech. He tosses the protestants and their reasons for believing him unfit for the agency on his horns with astonishing ease and strength, calls attention to the trifling

majority of some twenty-five votes by which he was returned defeated, and chills the habit that we often indulge of lauding the political integrity and decorum of our American ancestors at our own expense by inveighing against the "many Perjuries procured among the wretched Rabble brought to swear themselves intitled to a Vote" and roundly saying to the protestants to their faces, "Your Artifices did not prevail everywhere; nor your double Tickets, and Whole Boxes of Forged Votes. A great Majority of the new-chosen Assembly were of the old Members, and remain uncorrupted."

Apart from the reference to the illegitimacy of William Franklin, Franklin had passed through the heated contest with the Proprietaries without the slightest odor of fire upon his garments. With his hatred of contention, it is natural enough that he should have written to Collinson, when the pot of contention was boiling so fiercely in Pennsylvania in 1764: "The general Wish seems to be a King's Government. If that is not to be obtain'd, many talk of quitting the Province, and among them your old Friend, who is tired of these Contentions & longs for philosophic Ease and Leisure." But he did not overstate the case when he wrote to Samuel Rhoads in the succeeding year from London, "The Malice of our Adversaries I am well acquainted with, but hitherto it has been Harmless; all their Arrows shot against us, have been like those that Rabelais speaks of which were headed with Butter harden'd in the Sun."

Franklin was a doughty antagonist when at bay, but he had few obdurate resentments, and was quick to see the redeeming virtues of even those who had wronged him. He assisted in the circulation of John Dickinson's famous Farmer's Letters, and curiously enough when Dickinson was the President of the State of Pennsylvania at the close of the Revolution, and the 130,000 pounds which that State had agreed to pay for the vacant lots and unappropri-

ated wilderness lands of the Penns was claimed to be an inadequate consideration by some of them, he gave to John Penn, the son of Thomas Penn, a letter of recommendation to "the Civilities and Friendship" of Dickinson.

I would beg leave to mention it to your Excellency's Consideration [he said], whether it would not be reputable for the Province, in the cooler Season of Peace to reconsider that Act, and if the Allowance made to the Family should be found inadequate, to regulate it according to Equity, since it becomes a Virgin State to be particularly careful of its Reputation, and to guard itself not only against committing Injustice, but against even the suspicion of it.

But nothing better proves what a selfish cur Thomas Penn was than the fact that, more than twenty years after the election, of which we have been speaking, so magnanimous a man as Franklin could express this sober estimate of his conduct and character in a letter to Jan Ingenhousz:

In my own Judgment, when I consider that for near 80 Years, viz., from the Year 1700, William Penn and his Sons receiv'd the Quit-rents which were originally granted for the Support of Government, and yet refused to support the Government, obliging the People to make a fresh Provision for its Support all that Time, which cost them vast Sums, as the most necessary Laws were not to be obtain'd but at the Price of making such Provision; when I consider the Meanness and cruel Avarice of the late Proprietor, in refusing for several Years of War, to consent to any Defence of the Frontiers ravaged all the while by the Enemy, unless his Estate should be exempted from paying any Part of the Expence, not to mention other Atrocities too long for this letter, I can not but think the Family well off, and that it will be prudent in them to take the Money and be quiet. William Penn, the First Proprietor, Father of Thomas, the Husband of the present Dowager, was a wise and good Man, and as honest to the People as the extream Distress of his Circumstances would permit him to be, but the

said Thomas was a miserable Churl, always intent upon Griping and Saving; and whatever Good the Father may have done for the Province was amply undone by the Mischief receiv'd from the Son, who never did anything that had the Appearance of Generosity or Public Spirit but what was extorted from him by Solicitation and the Shame of Backwardness in Benefits evidently incumbent on him to promote, and which was done at last in the most ungracious manner possible. The Lady's Complaints of not duly receiving her Revenues from America are habitual; they were the same during all the Time of my long Residence in London, being then made by her Husband as Excuses for the Meanness of his Housekeeping and his Deficiency in Hospitality, tho' I knew at the same time that he was then in full Receipt of vast Sums annually by the Sale of Lands, Interest of Money, and Quit-rents. But probably he might conceal this from his Lady to induce greater Economy as it is known that he ordered no more of his Income home than was absolutely necessary for his Subsistence, but plac'd it at Interest in Pennsylvania & the Jerseys, where he could have 6 and 7 per Cent, while Money bore no more than 5 per cent in England. I us'd often to hear of those Complaints, and laugh at them, perceiving clearly their Motive. They serv'd him on other as well as on domestic Occasions. You remember our Rector of St. Martin's Parish, Dr. Saunders. He once went about, during a long and severe Frost, soliciting charitable Contributions to purchase Coals for poor Families. He came among others to me, and I gave him something. It was but little, very little, and yet it occasion'd him to remark, "You are more bountiful on this Occasion than your wealthy Proprietary, Mr. Penn, but he tells me he is distress'd by not receiving his Incomes from America." The Incomes of the family there must still be very great, for they have a Number of Manors consisting of the best Lands, which are preserved to them, and vast Sums at Interest well secur'd by Mortgages; so that if the Dowager does not receive her Proportion, there must be some Fault in her Agents. You will perceive by the length of this Article that I have been a little *échauffé* by her making the Complaints you mention to the Princess Dowager of Lichtenstein at Vienna. The Lady

herself is good & amiable, and I should be glad to serve her in anything just and reasonable; but I do not at present see that I can do more than I have done.

And Thomas Penn, too, like St. Sebastian, will never be drawn without *that* arrow in *his* side.

When Franklin was appointed agent, the provincial treasury was empty, but so deeply aroused was public sentiment, in favor of the substitution of a royal for the proprietary government, that the merchants of Philadelphia in a few hours subscribed a sum of eleven hundred pounds, to defray his expenses. Of this amount, however, he refused to accept but five hundred pounds, and, after a trying passage of thirty days, he found himself again at No. 7 Craven Street.

So far as the immediate object of his mission was concerned, it proved a failure. Before he left Pennsylvania, George Grenville, the Prime Minister of England, had called the agents of the American Colonies, resident at London, together and informed them that a debt of seventy-three millions sterling had been imposed upon England by the recent war, and that he proposed to ask Parliament to place a part of it upon the American Colonies. In the stream of events, which began with this proposal, the proprietary government in Pennsylvania and the royal governments in other American Colonies were alike destined to be swept away.

After the arrival of Franklin in England, the local struggle in Pennsylvania was of too secondary importance to command serious attention; and, beyond a few meagre allusions to it, there is no mention made of it in his letters. The temper of the English Ministry was not friendly to such a revolutionary change as the abolition of the proprietary government, and Franklin, after he had been in England a few years, had too many matters of continental concern to look after to have any time left for a single

phase of the general conflict between the Colonies and the mother country.

Before passing to his share in this conflict, a word should be said about the Albany Congress, in which he was the guiding spirit. In 1754, when another war between England and France was feared, a Congress of Commissioners from the several Colonies was ordered by the Lords of Trade to be held at Albany. The object of the call was to bring about a conference between the Colonies and the Chiefs of the Six Nations as to the best means of defending their respective territories from invasion by the French. When the order reached Pennsylvania, Governor Hamilton communicated it to the Assembly, and requested that body to provide proper presents for the Indians, who were to assemble at Albany; and he named Franklin and Isaac Norris, the Speaker of the Assembly, as the Commissioners from Pennsylvania, to act in conjunction with Thomas Penn and Richard Peters, the Secretary of the Proprietary Government. The presents were provided, and the nominations confirmed by the Assembly, and Franklin and his colleagues arrived at Albany in the month of June, 1754.

He brought his usual zeal to the movement. Before he left Philadelphia, with a view to allaying the jealousies, which existed between the different colonies, he published an article in his *Gazette* pointing out the importance of unanimity, which was accompanied by a woodcut representing a snake severed into as many sections as there were colonies. Each section bore the first letter of the name of a colony, and beneath the whole, in capital letters, were the words, "Join or die." On his way to Albany, he drafted a plan of union, looking to the permanent defence of the colonies, which closely resembled a similar plan of union, put forward thirty-two years before by Daniel Coxe in a tract entitled *A Description of the English Province of Carolina*. The Congress was attended by

Commissioners from all the Colonies except New Jersey, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. One of its members was Thomas Hutchinson, of Massachusetts, who was to bring down on Franklin's head the most trying crisis in his career. James De Lancey, the Lieutenant-Governor of New York, was chosen to be its presiding officer. Mingled with the Commissioners and the inhabitants of Albany, as they walked its streets, were the representatives of the Iroquois, whose tribes had cherished an unappeasable hatred for the French ever since the fatal day when Frontenac had thrown in his fortunes with those of their traditional enemies, the Hurons. Much time had to be expended by the Commissioners in distributing among them the presents that they had brought for them, and in conducting with ceremonious and tedious formality the long powwows in which the Indian heart, if there was such a thing, so dearly delighted. When the assembly entered upon its deliberations, a committee of seven was appointed by it to consider the objects of the Congress, and it was composed of one commissioner from each colony; Franklin being the member from Pennsylvania, and Thomas Hutchinson the member from Massachusetts. After the Commissioners gathered at Albany, it was found that plans of union had been framed by other members of the Congress besides Franklin. All the plans were compared and considered by the committee, and Franklin's was adopted, amended and reported to the Congress, and was by it, after a long debate, approved, and recommended to the favorable consideration of Parliament and the King whose assent, it was conceded, was essential to its efficacy.

It was a simple but comprehensive scheme of government. The several colonies were to remain independent except so far as they surrendered their autonomy for purposes of mutual defence; there were to be a President-General, appointed and paid by the King, who was to be the executive arm of the Union, and a Grand Council of forty-

eight members, elected by the different Colonial Assemblies, which was to be its legislative organ. The first meeting of the Council was to be at Philadelphia[1]; it was to meet once a year or oftener, if there was need, at such times and places as it should fix on adjournment, or as should be fixed, in case of an emergency, by the call of the President-General, who was authorized to issue such a call, with the consent of seven members of the Council; the tenure of members of the Council was to be for three years, and, on the death or resignation of a member, the vacancy was to be filled by the Assembly of his colony at its next sitting; after the election of the first members of the Council, the representation of the colonies in it was to be in proportion to their respective contributions to the Treasury of the Union, but no colony was to be represented by more than seven nor less than two members; the Council was to have the power to choose its Speaker, and was to be neither dissolved, prorogued nor continued in session longer than six weeks at one time without its consent, or the special command of the Crown; its members were to be allowed for their services ten shillings sterling a day, whether in session or journeying to or from the place of meeting;

[1] In connection with this feature of the proposed Plan of Union, Franklin gives us some interesting facts in regard to the distances that could be made in a day's journey in America in 1754. Philadelphia, he said, was named as the place for the first meeting of the Grand Council because it was central, and accessible by high roads, which were for the most part so good that forty or fifty miles a day might very well be, and frequently were, travelled over them. It could also be reached under very favorable conditions by water. In summer the passage from Charleston to Philadelphia often did not consume more than a week. Two or three days were required for the passage from Rhode Island to New York, through the Sound, and the distance between New York and Philadelphia could be covered in two days by stage-boats and wheel-carriages that set out every other day. The transit from Charleston to Philadelphia could be facilitated by the use of the Chesapeake Bay. But, if all the members of the Grand Council were to set out for Philadelphia on horseback, the most distant ones, those from New Hampshire and South Carolina, could probably arrive at their destination in fifteen or twenty days.

twenty-five members were to constitute a quorum, provided that among this number was at least one member from a majority of the Colonies; the assent of the President General was to be essential to the validity of all acts of the Council, and it was to be his duty to see that they were carried into execution, and the President-General and Council were to negotiate all treaties with the Indians, declare war and make peace with them, regulate all trade with them, purchase for the Crown from them all lands sold by them, and not within the limits of the old Colonies; and make and govern new settlements on such lands until erected into formal colonies. They were also to enlist and pay soldiers, build forts and equip vessels for the defence of the Colonies, but were to have no power to impress men in any colony without the consent of its assembly; all military and naval officers of the Union were to be named by the President-General with the approval of the Council, and all civil officers of the Union were to be named by the Council with the approval of the President-General; in case of vacancies, resulting from death or removal, in any such offices, they were to be filled by the Governors of the Provinces in which they occurred until appointments could be made in the regular way; and the President-General and Council were also to have the power to appoint a General Treasurer for the Union and a Local Treasurer for the Union in each colony, when necessary. All funds were to be disbursed on the joint order of the President-General and the Council, except when sums had been previously appropriated for particular purposes, and the President-General had been specially authorized to draw upon them; the general accounts of the Union were to be each year communicated to the several Colonial Assemblies; and, for the limited purposes of the Union, the President-General and the Council were authorized to enact laws, and to levy general duties, imposts and taxes; the laws so enacted to be transmitted to the King in

Council for his approbation, and, if not disapproved within three years, to remain in force. A final feature of the plan was the provision that each Colony might in a sudden emergency take measures for its own defence, and call upon the President-General and Council for reimbursement.

The Albany plan of union was one of the direct lineal antecedents of the Federal Constitution. In other words, it was one of the really significant things in our earlier history that tended to foster the habit of union, without which that constitution could never have been adopted. But, when considered in the light of the jealousy with which the mother country then regarded the Colonies, and with which the Colonies regarded each other, it is not at all surprising that the plan recommended by it should have to come to nothing. "Its fate was singular," says Franklin in the *Autobiography*. "The assemblies did not adopt it, as they all thought there was too much *prerogative* in it, and in England it was judg'd to have too much of the *democratic*." Even in Pennsylvania, though the Governor laid it before the Assembly with a handsome tribute to "the great clearness and strength of judgment," with which it had been drawn up, that body, when Franklin was absent, condemned it without giving it any serious consideration. In England it met with the disapproval of the Board of Trade, and "another scheme," to recur to the *Autobiography*, "was form'd, supposed to answer the same purpose better, whereby the governors of the provinces, with some members of their respective councils, were to meet and order the raising of troops, building of forts, etc., and to draw on the treasury of Great Britain for the expense, which was afterwards to be refunded by an act of Parliament laying a tax on America."

The Albany plan was an eminently wise one, and Franklin was probably justified in forming the favorable view of it which he expressed in these words in the *Autobiography:*

The different and contrary reasons of dislike to my plan makes me suspect that it was really the true medium; and I am still of opinion it would have been happy for both sides the water if it had been adopted. The colonies, so united, would have been sufficiently strong to have defended themselves; there would then have been no need of troops from England; of course, the subsequent pretence for taxing America, and the bloody contest it occasioned, would have been avoided. But such mistakes are not new; history is full of the errors of states and princes.

"Look round the habitable world, how few
Know their own good, or, knowing it, pursue!"

Those who govern, having much business on their hands, do not generally like to take the trouble of considering and carrying into execution new projects. The best public measures are therefore seldom *adopted from previous wisdom, but forc'd by the occasion.*

In the autumn of 1754, Franklin made a journey to Boston. There he met Shirley, and was apprised by him of the plan formed in England for the defence of the Colonies. This intelligence elicited three notable letters from him to Shirley in which he succinctly but luminously and vigorously stated his objections to the plan. In the first letter, he deprecated in brief but grave general terms a scheme of colonial administration, in which the people of the Colonies were to be excluded from all share in the choice of the Grand Council contemplated by the scheme, and were to be taxed by a Parliament in which they were to have no representation. Where heavy burdens are laid on the people, it had been found useful, he said, to make such burdens as much as possible their own acts. The people bear them better when they have, or think they have, some share in the direction; and, when any public measures are generally grievous, or even distasteful to the people, the wheels of government move more heavily.

In the second letter, Franklin states what in his opinion the people of the Colonies were likely to say of the proposed plan, namely, that they were as loyal as any other subjects of the King; that there was no reason to doubt their readiness to grant such sums as they could for the defence of the Colonies; that they were likely to be better judges of their own military necessities than the remote English Parliament; that the governors, who came to the Colonies, often came merely to make their fortunes, and to return to England, were not always men of the best abilities or integrity, had little in common with the colonists, and might be inclined to lavish military expenditures for the sake of the profit to be derived from such expenditures by them for themselves and their friends and dependents; that members of colonial councils being appointed by the Crown, on the recommendation of colonial governors, and being often men of small estates, and dependent on such governors for place, were too subject to influence; that Parliament was likely to be misled by such governors and councils; and yet their combined influence would probably shield them against popular resentment; that it was deemed an unquestionable right of Englishmen not to be taxed but by their own consent, given through their representatives, and that the Colonies had no representation in Parliament; that to tax the people of the Colonies without such representation, and to exclude them altogether from the proposed plan was a reflection on their loyalty, or their patriotism, or their intelligence, and that to tax them without their consent, was, indeed, more like raising contributions in an enemy's country than the taxation of Englishmen. Such were some of the objections stated in this letter to the imposition of taxes on the Colonies by the British Parliament. There were others of a kindred nature, and still others, based upon the claim that the Colonies were already paying heavy secondary taxes to England. Taxes, paid by landholders and arti-

ficers in England, Franklin declared, entered into the prices paid in America for their products, and were therefore really taxes paid by America to Britain. The difference between the prices, paid by America for these products, and the cheaper prices, at which they could be bought in other countries, if America were allowed to trade with them, was also but a tax paid by America to Britain and, where the price was paid for goods which America could manufacture herself, if allowed by Great Britain to do so, the whole of it was but such a tax. Such a tax, too, was the difference between the price that America received for its own products in Britain, after the payment of duties, and the price that it could obtain in other countries, if allowed to trade with them. In fine, as America was not permitted to regulate its trade, and restrain the importation and consumption of British superfluities, its whole wealth ultimately found its way to Great Britain, and, if the inhabitants of Great Britain were enriched in consequence, and rendered better able to pay their taxes, that was nearly the same thing as if America itself was taxed. Of these kinds of indirect taxes America did not complain, but to pay direct taxes, without being consulted as to whether they should be laid, or as to how they should be applied, could not but seem harsh to Englishmen, who could not conceive that by hazarding their lives and fortunes in subduing and settling new countries, and in extending the dominion and increasing the commerce of the mother country, they had forfeited the native rights of Britons; which they thought that, on these accounts, might well be given to them, even if they had been before in a state of slavery. Another objection to the scheme, the letter asserted, was the likelihood that the Governors and Councillors, not being associated with any representatives of the people, to unite with them in their measures, and to render these measures palatable to the people, would become distrusted and odious; and thus would

embitter the relations between governors and governed and bring about total confusion. The letter, short as it is, sums up almost all the main points of the more copious argument that was, in a few years, to be made with so much pathos as well as power by the Colonies against the resolve of the British Ministry to tax them without their consent.

Franklin's third letter to Shirley is but the statement in embryo of the sagacious and enlarged views of the policy of Great Britain, with respect to the Colonies, which he subsequently expressed in so many impressive forms. The letter is, first of all, interesting as showing that the subject of promoting a closer union between Great Britain and her colonies by allowing the latter to be represented in Parliament had already been discussed by Shirley and Franklin in conversation. It is also an indication, for all that was said later about the submissive loyalty of the Colonies, that the sense of injustice and hardship worked by the repressive effects of the existing British restrictions on American commerce and manufactures was widely diffused in America. The proposal to allow America representatives in Parliament would, Franklin thought, be very acceptable to the Colonies, provided the presentation was a reasonable one in point of numbers, and provided all the old acts of Parliament, limiting the trade, or cramping the manufactures, of the Colonies, were, at the same time, repealed and the cis-Atlantic subjects of Great Britain put on the same footing of commercial and industrial freedom as its trans-Atlantic subjects, until a Parliament, in which both were represented, should deem it to be to the interest of the whole empire that some or all of the obnoxious laws should be revived. Franklin also was too much of a latter-day American not to believe that laws, which then seemed to the colonists to be unjust to them, would be acquiesced in more cheerfully by them, and be easier of execution, if approved by a Parliament in which they were

represented. The letter ended with a series of original reflections, highly characteristic of the free play, which marked the mental operations of the writer in dealing with any subject, encumbered by short-sighted prejudices. Of what importance was it, he argued, whether manufacturers of iron lived at Birmingham or Sheffield, or both, since they were still within the bounds of Great Britain? Could the Goodwin Sands be laid dry by banks, and land, equal to a large county thereby gained to England, and presently filled with English inhabitants, would it be right to deprive such inhabitants of the common privileges enjoyed by other Englishmen, the right of vending their produce in the same ports, or of making their own shoes, because a merchant or a shoemaker, living on the old land, might fancy it more for his advantage to trade or make shoes for them? Would this be right even if the land was gained at the expense of the State? And would it seem less right if the charge and labor of gaining the additional territory to Great Britain had been borne by the settlers themselves?

> Now I look on the colonies [Franklin continued] as so many counties gained to Great Britain, and more advantageous to it than if they had been gained out of the seas around its coasts, and joined to its land: For being in different climates, they afford greater variety of produce, and being separated by the ocean, they increase much more its shipping and seamen; and since they are all included in the British Empire, which has only extended itself by their means; and the strength and wealth of the parts are the strength and wealth of the whole; what imports it to the general state, whether a merchant, a smith, or a hatter, grow rich in Old or New England?

To this question, of course, the nineteenth or twentieth century could only have had one answer; but the eighteenth, blinded by economic delusions, had many.

In the opinion of Franklin, expressed in his letters to Peter Collinson, until the Albany plan of union, or some-

thing like it, was adopted, no American war would ever be carried on as it should be, and Indian affairs would continue to be mismanaged. But he was fair-minded and clear-sighted enough to see that, if some such plan was not adopted, the fault would lie with the Colonies rather than with Great Britain. In one of his letters to Peter Collinson, he declared that, in his opinion, it was not likely that any of them would agree to the plan, or even propose any amendments to it.

> Every Body [he said] cries, a Union is absolutely necessary; but when they come to the Manner and Form of the Union, their weak Noddles are perfectly distracted. So if ever there be an Union, it must be form'd at home by the Ministry and Parliament. I doubt not but they will make a good one, and I wish it may be done this winter.

The essential features of the Albany plan of union were all outlined by Franklin three or four years before the Albany Congress met, in a letter to James Parker, his New York partner. A union of the colonies, under existing conditions, was, he thought, impracticable. If a governor became impressed with the importance of such a union, and asked the other colonial governors to recommend it to their assemblies, the request came to nothing, either because the governors were often on ill terms with their assemblies, and were seldom the men who exercised the most influence over them, or because they threw cold water on the request for fear that the cost of such a union might make the people of their colonies less able or willing to give to them, or simply because they did not earnestly realize the necessity for it. Besides, under existing conditions, there was no one to back such a request or to answer objections to it. A better course would be to select half a dozen men of good understanding and address, and send them around, as ambassadors to the different colonies, to urge upon them the expediency of the union.

It would be strange, indeed, Franklin thought, if the six Iroquois tribes of ignorant savages could be capable of forming a union which had lasted for ages, and yet ten or a dozen English colonies be incapable of forming a similar one. These views were elicited by a pamphlet on the importance of gaining and preserving the friendship of the Indians, which had been sent to Franklin by Parker, and they constitute a natural introduction to a brief review of the relations sustained by one of the most reasonable of the children of men to perhaps the most unreasonable of all the children of men, the Indian of the American forest.

With the Indians, their habits, characteristics, polity and trade Franklin was very conversant. Repeatedly, during his lifetime, the frontiers of Pennsylvania were harried by the tomahawk and scalping-knife. In a letter, written a few months after Braddock's defeat to Richard Partridge, he mentions, for instance, that the savages had just surprised and cut off eight families near Shamokin, killing and scalping thirteen grown persons and kidnapping twelve children. In another letter to Peter Collinson, written the next year, he made this appalling summary of what, with the aid of the French, the revenge of the Delawares for the imposition practised upon them in the Walking Purchase was supposed to have cost the Province. "Some Hundreds of Lives lost, many Farms destroy'd and near £100,000 spent, yet," he added, "the Proprietor refuses to be taxed except for a trifling Part of his Estate." During the incursions of this period, the Indian war-parties pushed their outrages to a point only eighty miles from Philadelphia. A diarist, Thomas Lloyd, who accompanied Franklin on his expedition to Gnadenhutten, gives us this ghastly description of what they found there:

> Here all round appears nothing but one continued scene of horror and destruction. Where lately flourished a happy and peaceful village, it is now all silent and desolate; the houses burnt; the inhabitants butchered in the most shocking man-

ner; their mangled bodies, for want of funerals, exposed to birds and beasts of prey; and all kinds of mischief perpetrated that wanton cruelty can invent.

Not even a Rizpah left to brood over the scalpless forms, and to drive away the buzzard and the wild things of the forest! In this scene, and the pettier but similarly tragic scenes of death and havoc, furnished, from time to time, over a wide range of frontier territory, by lonely fields and cabins, upon which the tomahawk had ruthlessly descended, is to be found the psychology of the furious passions, which hurried the wretched Conestoga Indians out of existence, and of the outspoken or covert sympathy, which made a mockery of the attempt to bring their butchers to justice. Even men cooler than the Paxton Boys, hardened by revolting cruelties, not distinguishable from those inflicted by talon or tooth, except in their atrocious refinements of torture, and yet brought home in some form or other to almost every fireside in Pennsylvania, came to think of killing and mutilating an Indian with no more compunction than if he were a rattlesnake. James Parton mentions with a natural shudder the fact that Governor John Penn, after the retirement of the Paxton Boys from Philadelphia, offered the following bounties: For every captive male Indian of any hostile tribe one hundred and fifty dollars; for every female captive one hundred and thirty-eight dollars, for the scalp of a male Indian one hundred and thirty-four dollars, for the scalp of a female Indian fifty dollars. To Franklin himself, when on the Gnadenhutten expedition, fell the duty of instructing a Captain Vanetta, who was about to raise a company of foot-soldiers for the protection of upper Smithfield, while its inhabitants were looking after their corn, that forty dollars would be allowed and paid by the Provincial Government for each Indian scalp produced by one of his men with the proper attestations. How

accustomed even Franklin became to the ever-repeated story of Indian barbarities, and to occasional reprisals by the whites, hardly less shocking, is revealed by a brief letter from him to Peter Collinson in 1764, in which, with the dry conciseness of an old English chronicler, he reports the narratives of a British soldier, Owens, who had deserted to the Indians, and a white boy, whom Owens had brought back with him from captivity, together with five propitiatory Indian scalps, when he returned to his former allegiance.

The Account given by him and the Boy [wrote Franklin] is, that they were with a Party of nine Indians, to wit, 5 men, 2 Women, and 2 Children, coming down Susquehanah to fetch Corn from their last Year's Planting Place; that they went ashore and encamp'd at Night and made a Fire by which they slept: that in the Night Owens made the White Boy get up from among the Indians, and go to the other side of the Fire; and then taking up the Indians' Guns, he shot two of the Men immediately, and with his Hatchet dispatch'd another Man together with the Women and Children. Two men only made their escape. Owens scalp'd the 5 grown Persons, and bid the White Boy scalp the Children; but he declin'd it, so they were left.

Franklin, however, was not the man to say, as General Philip Sheridan was many years afterwards to be reputed to have said, that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. In the course of his varied life, he had many opportunities for becoming familiarly acquainted with the history and character of the Indians, and forming a just judgment as to how far their fiendish outbreaks were due to sheer animal ferocity, and how far to the provocation of ill-treatment by the whites; and he was too just not to know and declare that almost every war between the Indians and the whites in his time had been occasioned by some injustice of the latter towards the former. As far back as 1753, he

and Isaac Norris, the Speaker of the Assembly, were appointed commissioners by it to unite with Richard Peters, the Secretary of the Proprietary Government, in negotiating a treaty with the western Indians at Carlisle, and the manner, in which this treaty was conducted, is told in the *Autobiography* in his lively way. In 1756, he again served as a commissioner, this time with William Logan and Richard Peters, two members of the Governor's Council, and Joseph Fox, William Masters and John Hughes, three members of the Assembly, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty at Easton with Teedyuscung, the King of the Delawares. At this conference, Governor Denny himself was likewise present. In 1763, he was appointed one of the commissioners to expend the money appropriated by the Assembly for levying a military force to defend the Pennsylvania frontier against the Indians. The Albany Congress, as we have seen, brought him into direct personal contact with the Iroquois who, to a fell savagery only to be compared with that of the most ferocious beasts of the jungle, united a capacity for political cohesion and the rudiments of civilized life which gave them quite an exceptional standing in the history of the American Indian. By virtue of these circumstances, to say nothing of other sources of knowledge and information, Franklin obtained an insight, at once shrewd and profound, into everything that related to the American Indian, including the best methods by which his good will could be conciliated and his trade secured. The following remarks in his Canada Pamphlet give us a good idea of the mobility and special adaptation to his physical environment which made the Indian, in proportion to his numbers, the most formidable foe that the world has ever seen:

> They go to war, as they call it, in small parties, from fifty men down to five. Their hunting life has made them acquainted with the whole country, and scarce any part of it is impracti-

cable to such a party. They can travel thro' the woods even by night, and know how to conceal their tracks. They pass easily between your forts undiscovered; and privately approach the settlements of your frontier inhabitants. They need no convoys of provisions to follow them; for whether they are shifting from place to place in the woods, or lying in wait for an opportunity to strike a blow, every thicket and every stream furnishes so small a number with sufficient subsistence. When they have surpriz'd separately, and murder'd and scalp'd a dozen families, they are gone with inconceivable expedition through unknown ways, and 'tis very rare that pursuers have any chance of coming up with them. In short, long experience has taught our planters, that they cannot rely upon forts as a security against *Indians:* The inhabitants of *Hackney* might as well rely upon the tower of *London* to secure them against highwaymen and housebreakers.

This is the Indian seen from the point of view of the soldier and colonial administrator. He is fully as interesting, when considered by Franklin in a letter to Richard Jackson from the point of view of the philosopher:

They visit us frequently, and see the advantages that arts, sciences, and compact societies procure us. They are not deficient in natural understanding; and yet they have never shown any inclination to change their manner of life for ours, or to learn any of our arts. When an Indian child has been brought up among us, taught our language, and habituated to our customs, yet, if he goes to see his relatives, and makes one Indian ramble with them, there is no persuading him ever to return. And that this is not natural to them merely as Indians, but as men, is plain from this, that when white persons, of either sex, have been taken prisoners by the Indians, and lived a while with them, though ransomed by their friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first opportunity of escaping again into the woods, from whence

there is no redeeming them. One instance I remember to have heard, where the person was brought home to possess a good estate; but, finding some care necessary to keep it together, he relinquished it to a younger brother, reserving to himself nothing but a gun and a match-coat, with which he took his way again into the wilderness.

So that I am apt to imagine that close societies, subsisting by labour and art, arose first not from choice but from necessity, when numbers, being driven by war from their hunting grounds, and prevented by seas, or by other nations, from obtaining other hunting grounds, were crowded together into some narrow territories, which without labour could not afford them food.

A man had to be humorous, indeed, to see anything humorous in the American Indian, but Franklin's sense of the ludicrous was equal to even that supreme achievement. We have already referred to the image of hell that he saw in the nocturnal orgies of the drunken Indians at Carlisle. Prudently enough, they were not allowed by the Provincial Commissioners to have the rum that was in store for them until they had ratified the treaty entered into on that occasion; an artifice that doubtless proved quite as effective in hastening its consummation as the one adopted by Chaplain Beatty of distributing the rum before, instead of after, prayers, did in securing the punctual attendance of Franklin's soldiers at them. But diabolical as were the gestures and yells of the drink-crazed Indians, men and women, at Carlisle, Franklin contrived to bring away a facetious story from the conference for the *Autobiography*. The orator, who called on the Commissioners the next day, after the debauch, for the purpose of apologizing for the conduct of himself and his people,

laid it upon the rum; and then endeavoured to excuse the rum by saying, "*The Great Spirit, who made all things, made everything for some use, and whatever use he design'd anything*

for, that use it should always be put to. Now, when he made rum, he said 'Let this be for the Indians to get drunk with'; and it must be so."... And indeed [adds Franklin] if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for cultivators of the earth, it seems not improbable that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited the sea-coast.

There is another good Indian story in the letter from Franklin to Richard Jackson from which we have recently quoted. When everything had been settled at a conference between the Six Nations and some of the Colonies, and nothing remained to be gone through with but a mutual exchange of civilities, the English Commissioners told the Indians that they had in their country a college for the instruction of youth in the various languages, arts and sciences, and that, if the Indians were willing, they would take back with them a half-dozen of their brightest lads and bring them up in the best manner. The Indians, after weighing the proposal, replied that they remembered that some of their youths had formerly been educated at that college, but that it had been observed that for a long time, after they returned to their friends, they were absolutely good for nothing; being neither acquainted with the true methods of killing deer, catching beaver, or surprising an enemy. The proposition, however, they regarded as a mark of kindness and good will on the part of the English, which merited a grateful return, and therefore, if the English gentlemen would send a dozen or two of their children to Opondago, the Great Council would take care of their education, bring them up in what was really the best manner, and make men of them.[1]

[1] Another good Indian story is told by Franklin in his *Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America:* "A Swedish Minister, having assembled the chiefs of the Susquehanah Indians, made a Sermon to them, acquainting them with the principal historical Facts on which our Religion is founded; such as the Fall of our First Parents by eating an Apple, the com-

That the whites had much to answer for in their intercourse with the Indians Franklin saw clearly. The Canada Pamphlet speaks of the goods sold to them by French and English traders as loaded with all the impositions that fraud and knavery could contrive to enhance their value, and in one of Franklin's notes on the Albany plan of union he referred many Indian wars to cheating, practised by Indian traders on Indians, whom they had first made drunk. These traders he termed on another occasion, "the most vicious and abandoned Wretches of our Nation." "I do not believe we shall ever have a firm peace with the Indians," he wrote to Thomas Pownall in 1756, "till we

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ing of Christ to repair the Mischief, his Miracles and Suffering, &c. When he had finished, an Indian Orator stood up to thank him. 'What you have told us,' says he, 'is all very good. It is indeed bad to eat Apples. It is better to make them all into Cyder. We are much oblig'd by your kindness in coming so far, to tell us these Things which you have heard from your Mothers. In return, I will tell you some of those we have heard from ours. In the Beginning, our Fathers had only the Flesh of Animals, to subsist on; and if their Hunting was unsuccessful, they were starving. Two of our young Hunters, having kill'd a Deer, made a Fire in the Woods to broil some Part of it. When they were about to satisfy their Hunger, they beheld a beautiful young Woman descend from the Clouds, and seat herself on that Hill, which you see yonder among the blue Mountains. They said to each other, it is a Spirit that has smelt our broiling Venison, and wishes to eat of it; let us offer some to her. They presented her with the Tongue; she was pleas'd with the Taste of it, and said, "Your kindness shall be rewarded; come to this Place after thirteen Moons, and you shall find something that will be of great Benefit in nourishing you and your children to the latest Generations." They did so, and, to their surprise, found Plants they had never seen before; but which, from that ancient time, have been constantly cultivated among us, to our great Advantage. Where her right Hand had touched the Ground, they found Maize; where her left hand had touch'd it, they found Kidney-Beans, and where her Back side had sat on it they found Tobacco.' The good Missionary, disgusted with this idle Tale, said: 'What I delivered to you were sacred Truths; but what you tell me is mere Fable, Fiction, and Falsehood.' The Indian, offended, reply'd, 'My brother, it seems your Friends have not done you Justice in your Education; they have not well instructed you in the Rules of common Civility. You saw that we, who understand and practise those Rules, believ'd all your stories; why do you refuse to believe ours?' "

have well drubbed them." This was the natural language of a man who had no toleration for wanton applications of force but did not shrink from applying it, when nothing else would answer. But no man could have been more fearless than he in denouncing outrages committed by the whites upon inoffensive Indians, or Indians of any sort, when not on the war path. "It grieves me," he wrote to Sir William Johnson in 1766, "to hear that our Frontier People are yet greater Barbarians than the Indians, and continue to murder them in time of peace."

His views about the proper methods of controlling the Indians and securing their trade were worthy of his liberal and enlightened mind. Their friendship he deemed to be of the greatest consequence to the Colonies, and the best way to make sure of it, he thought, was to regulate trade between the whites and the Indians in such a way as to convince the latter that, as between France and England, the English goods were the best and cheapest, and the English merchants the most honorable, and to form a union between the Colonies strong enough to make the Indians feel that they could depend on it for protection against the French, or that they would suffer at its hands if they should break with it. The Indian trade, for which the colonists had sacrificed so much blood and treasure, was, he boldly reminded his auditors, in his famous examination before the House of Commons, not an American but a British interest, maintained with British manufactures for the profit of British merchants and manufacturers. In a letter to Cadwallader Colden, he even suggested that the Government should take it over, and furnish goods to the Indians at the cheapest prices, without regard to profit, as Massachusetts had done.

Other suggestions of Franklin with respect to the conduct of the Indian trade were hardly less interesting. Pittsburg, he contended, after the restoration of peace in 1759, should be retained by the English, with a small tract

of land about it for supplying the fort with provisions, and with sufficient hunting grounds in its vicinity for the peculiar needs of their Indian friends. A fort, and a small population of sober, orderly people there, he thought, would help to preserve the friendship of the Indians by bringing trade and the arts into close proximity to them, and would bridle them, if seduced from their allegiance by the French, or would, at least, stand in the gap, and be a shield to the other American frontiers.

Another suggestion of his was that, in time of peace, parties should be allowed to issue from frontier garrisons on hunting expeditions, with or without Indians, and enjoy the profits of the peltry that they brought back. In this way, a body of wood-runners would be formed, well acquainted with the country and of great value in time of war as guides and scouts. Every Indian was a hunter, every Indian was a disciplined soldier. They hunted in precisely the same manner as they made war. The only difference was that in hunting they skulked, surprised and killed animals, and, in making war, men. It was just such soldiers that the colonies needed; for the European military discipline was of little use in the woods. These words were penned four or five years before the battle of the Monongahela confirmed so bloodily their truth. Franklin also thought that a number of sober, discreet smiths should be encouraged to reside among the Indians. The whole subsistence of Indians depended on their keeping their guns in order. They were a people that thought much of their temporal, but little of their spiritual interests, and, therefore, a smith was more likely to influence them than a Jesuit. In a letter to his son, he mentions that he had dined recently with Lord Shelburne, and had availed himself of the occasion to urge that a colony should be planted in the Illinois country for furnishing provisions to military garrisons more cheaply, clinching the hold of the English upon the country, and building up

a strength which, in the event of a future war, might easily be poured down the Mississippi upon the lower country, and into the Bay of Mexico, to be used against Cuba or Mexico itself.

The reader has already had brought to his attention the provisions of the Albany plan of union which were intended to vest in the government sketched by it the control of Indian treaties, trade and purchases.

The ignorance of the Indian character, which prevailed in England, often, we may be sure, brought a smile to the face of Franklin. Among his writings are remarks made at the request of Lord Shelburne on a plan for regulating Indian affairs submitted to him by the latter. It is to be regretted that the circumstances of the case were such that it was impossible for Franklin to escape the restraints of official gravity even when he was assigning the rambling habits of the Indians as his reason for believing that an Indian chief would hardly be willing to reside permanently with one of the functionaries, who was to aid in carrying the plan into effect, or when he was giving the high value, that the Indian attached to personal liberty, and the low value, that he attached to personal property, as his reason for thinking that imprisonment for debt was scarcely consistent with aboriginal ideas of equity. The plan was of a piece with the suggestion attributed to Dean Tucker that the colonies should be protected from Indian incursions by clearing away the trees and bushes from a tract of land, a mile in width, at the back of the colonies. As Benjamin Vaughan said, this brilliant idea not only involved a first cost (not to mention the fact that trees and bushes grow again when cut down) of some £128,000 for every hundred miles but quite overlooked the fact that the Indians, like other people, knew the difference between day and night. He forgot, said Franklin, "that there is a night in every twenty-four hours."

The distinction, which Franklin enjoyed in England,

during his first mission to that country, was due to his philosophical and literary reputation, but his second mission to England and the colonial agencies, held by him while it lasted, afforded him an opportunity for playing a conspicuous part in the stirring transactions, which ushered in the American Revolution. Apart from all other considerations, his place in the history of these transactions will always be an extraordinary one because of the consummate wisdom and self-restraint exhibited by him in his relations to the controversy that finally ended in a fratricidal war between Great Britain and her colonies, which should never have been kindled. To the issues, involved in this controversy, he brought a vision as undimmed by political bigotry and false economic conceptions of colonial dependence as that of a British statesman of the present day. It is easy to believe that, if his counsels had been heeded, Great Britain and the communities, which make up the American Union, would now be connected by some close organic or federative tie. It is, at least, certain that no other Englishman on either side of the Atlantic saw as clearly as he did the true interests of both parties to the fatal conflict, or strove with such unerring sagacity and sober moderation of purpose to avert the breach between the two great branches of the English People. In no way can the extreme folly, which forced independence upon the colonies, be better measured than by contrasting the heated vehemence of Franklin's later feelings about the King and Parliament with his earlier sentiments towards the country that he did not cease to call "home" until to call it so would have been mockery. Devoted attachment to England, the land endeared to him by so many ties of family, intellectual sympathy and friendship, profound loyalty to the British Crown, deep-seated reverence for the laws, institutions and usages of the noble people, in whose inheritance of enlightened freedom he vainly insisted upon having his full share as an Englishman, were all

characteristics of his, before the alienation of the colonies from Great Britain.[1]

His earlier utterances breathe a spirit of ingrained loyalty to the British Crown. The French were "mischievous neighbors," France "that perfidious nation." "I congratulate you on the defeat of Jacobitism by your glorious Duke," he wrote to Strahan in 1746, after the Duke of Cumberland had earned his title of "The

[1] When asked in the course of his examination before the House of Commons what the temper of America towards Great Britain was before the year 1763, Franklin made this reply: "The best in the world. They submitted willingly to the government of the Crown, and paid, in all their courts, obedience to acts of parliament. Numerous as the people are in the several provinces, they cost you nothing in forts, citadels, garrisons, or armies, to keep them in subjection. They were governed by this country at the expence only of a little pen, ink and paper. They were led by a thread. They had not only a respect, but an affection for Great-Britain; for its laws, its customs and manners, and even a fondness for its fashions, that greatly increased the commerce. Natives of Britain were always treated with particular regard; to be an Old England man was, of itself, a character of some respect, and gave a kind of rank among us."

How little colored by the exigencies of the moment these words were is made apparent in a letter from Franklin to Francis Maseres after the independence of the Colonies had been acknowledged by England. "The true *loyalists* were the people of America, against whom they (the Tories) acted. No people were ever known more truly loyal, and universally so, to their sovereigns. The Protestant succession in the House of Hanover was their idol. Not a Jacobite was to be found from one end of the Colonies to the other. They were affectionate to the people of England, zealous and forward to assist in her wars, by voluntary contributions of men and money, even beyond their proportion. The King and Parliament had frequently acknowledged this by public messages, resolutions, and reimbursements. But they were equally fond of what they esteemed their rights; and, if they resisted when those were attacked, it was a resistance in favour of a British constitution, which every Englishman might share in enjoying, who should come to live among them; it was resisting arbitrary impositions, that were contrary to common right and to their fundamental constitutions, and to constant ancient usage. It was indeed a resistance in favour of the liberties of England, which might have been endangered by success in the attempt against ours; and therefore a great man in your Parliament did not scruple to declare, he *rejoiced that America had resisted.* I, for the same reason, may add this very resistance to the other instances of their loyalty."

Butcher" at Culloden. "I pray God to preserve long to Great Britain the English Laws, Manners, Liberties, and Religion," was an exclamation seven years later in one of his letters to Richard Jackson. "Wise and good prince," "the best of Kings," "Your good King," are some of the terms in which he expressed his opinion of his royal master. In the light of later events, there is something little short of amusing about the horoscope which he framed of the reign of George the Third in a letter to Strahan a year or so before the passage of the Stamp Act. Replying to forebodings of Strahan, Franklin said of the Prince, whom he styled "Our virtuous young King":

> On the contrary, I am of Opinion that his Virtue and the Consciousness of his sincere Intentions to make his People happy will give him Firmness and Steadiness in his Measures and in the Support of the honest Friends he has chosen to serve him; and when that Firmness is fully perceiv'd, Faction will dissolve and be dissipated like a Morning Fog before the rising Sun, leaving the rest of the Day clear with a Sky serene and cloudless. Such after a few of the first Years will be the future course of his Majesty's Reign, which I predict will be happy and truly glorious.

In his letter to Polly about the French King and Queen, whom he had seen dining in state, which was written the year after the repeal of the Stamp Act, he declared, in his fear that he might seem to be too well pleased with them, that no Frenchman should go beyond him in thinking his own King and Queen, "the very best in the World, and the most amiable." The popular commotions in the succeeding year, with their watch cry of Wilkes and Liberty, seemed to him to indicate that some punishment was preparing for a people, who were ungratefully abusing the best Constitution and the best King that any nation was ever blessed with. As late as 1770, he wrote to Dr. Samuel Cooper, "Let us, therefore, hold fast our Loyalty to our

King, who has the best Disposition towards us, and has a Family Interest in our Prosperity." Indeed, even two years later than this, he complacently wrote to his son, "The King, too, has lately been heard to speak of me with great regard." Strangely enough it was not until two years before the battle of Bunker Hill that he awoke sufficiently from his fool's paradise to write to his son, "Between you and I, the late Measures have been, I suspect, very much the King's own, and he has in some Cases a great Share of what his Friends call *Firmness*." Even then he hazarded the opinion that by painstaking and proper management the wrong impression of the colonists that George the Third had received might be removed. Down to this time so secretly had the King pursued the insidious system of corruption by which he kept his Parliamentary majority unmurmuringly subservient to his system of personal government, that Franklin does not appear to have even suspected that his was the master hand, or rather purse, which shaped all its proceedings against America. When the whole truth, however, was made manifest to Franklin, his awakening was correspondingly rude and unforgiving. How completely reversed became the current of all his feelings towards George the Third, after the Revolution began, we have already seen in some of our references to letters written by him to his English friends, in which the King, whom he once revered, was scored in terms of passionate reprobation.

Tenacious, too, was the affection with which Franklin clung to England and the English people. Some years before the passage of the Stamp Act, he wrote to Lord Kames from London that he purposed to give form to the material that he had been gathering for his *Art of Virtue* when he returned to his *other* country, that is to say, America.

Of all the enviable Things England has [he wrote a few years

later to Polly], I envy it most its People. Why should that petty Island, which compar'd to America, is but like a stepping Stone in a Brook, scarce enough of it above Water to keep one's Shoes dry; why, I say, should that little Island enjoy in almost every Neighbourhood, more sensible, virtuous, and elegant Minds, than we can collect in ranging 100 Leagues of our vast Forests?

How eagerly even when he was in the New World he relished the observations of his friend Strahan on current English politics, we have already seen. We have also already seen how seriously he entertained even the thought of transferring his family for good to England. Indeed his intense loyalty to English King and People, together with his remoteness from the contagious excitement of the Colonies over the passage of the Stamp Act, caused him for a time, with a curious insensibility to the real state of public opinion in America, to lag far behind the revolutionary movement in that country. Not only, before he was fully aroused to the stern purpose of his fellow-countrymen to resist the collection of the stamp tax to the last extremity, did he recommend his friend John Hughes to the British Ministry as a stamp-tax collector, and send to his partner Hall a large quantity of paper for the use of the *Gazette*, of such dimensions as to secure a saving in stamps for its issues, but he wrote to Hughes in these terms besides:

If it (the Stamp Act) continues, your undertaking to execute it may make you unpopular for a Time, but your acting with Coolness and Steadiness, and with every Circumstance in your Power of Favour to the People, will by degrees reconcile them. In the meantime, a firm Loyalty to the Crown & faithful Adherence to the Government of this Nation, which it is the Safety as well as Honour of the Colonies to be connected with, will always be the wisest Course for you and I to take, whatever may be the Madness of the Populace or their blind Lead-

ers, who can only bring themselves and Country into Trouble and draw on greater Burthens by Acts of Rebellious Tendency.

The rashness of the Virginia Assembly in relation to the Stamp Act he thought simply amazing.

Much better known is the letter that he wrote about the same time to Charles Thomson. After stating that he had done everything in his power to prevent the passage of the Stamp Act, he said:

But the Tide was too strong against us. The nation was provoked by American Claims of Independence, and all Parties joined in resolving by this act to settle the point. We might as well have hindered the sun's setting. That we could not do. But since 'tis down, my Friend, and it may be long before it rises again, let us make as good a night of it as we can. We may still light candles. Frugality and Industry will go a great way toward indemnifying us. Idleness and Pride tax with a heavier hand than Kings and Parliaments; if we can get rid of the former, we may easily bear the latter.

Six months later, when the loud and fierce protest of his fellow-countrymen against the Stamp Act had reached his ear, and convinced him that they were more likely to light camp-fires than candles, he held a very different language. Asked, during his famous examination before the House of Commons, whether he thought that the people of America would submit to pay the Stamp Tax, if it were moderated, he replied, "No, never, unless compelled by force of arms." Public leaders, after all, to use Gladstone's happy image with regard to the orator, do little more than give back in rain what they receive in mist from the mass of men. But with the repeal of the Stamp Act, and part of the duties imposed upon America, Franklin would readily have lapsed in every respect into his old affectionate relations to England, if Parliament had not, by its unwise reservation of its right to tax America, fallen

into the bad surgery, to use his own words, of leaving splinters in the wound that it had inflicted. It now seems strange enough that, after the turbulent outbreak in America, which preceded the repeal, he should have been willing to accept a post under the Duke of Grafton, and to remain in England for some time longer if not for the rest of his life; yet such is the fact. When he heard through a friend that the Duke had said that, if he chose rather to reside in England than to return to his office as Deputy Postmaster-General for America, it would not be the Duke's fault, if he was not well provided for, he declared in the polished phrases of a courtier that there was no nobleman, to whom he could from sincere respect for his great abilities and amiable qualities so cordially attach himself, or to whom he should so willingly be obliged for the provision mentioned, as to the Duke of Grafton, if his Grace should think that he could in any station, where he might be placed, be serviceable to him and to the public. To any one who knows what a profligate the Duke was, during the most scandalous part of his career, this language sounds not a little like the conventional phrases in which Franklin, during his mission to France, assured Crocco, the blackmailing emissary of the piratical emperor of Morocco that he had no doubt but that, as soon as the affairs of the United States were a little settled, they would manifest equally good dispositions as those of his master and take all the proper steps to cultivate and secure the friendship of a monarch, whose character, Franklin knew, they had long esteemed and respected.

But in the same letter to his son, in which the declaration about the Duke of Grafton was recalled, Franklin made it clear that he was unwilling, by accepting office, to place himself in the power of any English Minister committed to the fatuous policy of taxing America. It was not until forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, and an American Whig could no longer hold an English office

without reproach, that his innate conservatism of character yielded to the forces which were slowly but certainly rending the two countries apart. Three years after the repeal of the Stamp Act, which he dubbed "the mother of mischief," he wrote to Jean Baptiste Le Roy of the popular disturbances in Boston as "sudden, unpremeditated things, that happened only among a few of the lower sort." A month later, he wrote to Dr. Cooper:

> I have been in constant Pain since I heard of Troops assembling at Boston, lest the Madness of Mobs, or the Insolence of Soldiers, or both, should, when too near each other, occasion some Mischief difficult to be prevented or repaired, and which might spread far and wide. "I hope however," he added, "that Prudence will predominate, and keep all quiet."

A little later still, in another letter to the same correspondent, after saying that he could scarcely conceive a King of better dispositions, of more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of all his subjects than was George the Third, he further and truly said: "The Body of this People, too, is of a noble and generous Nature, loving and honouring the Spirit of Liberty, and hating arbitrary Power of all sorts. We have many, very many, friends among them."

As late as the autumn of 1774 he was grieved to hear of mobs and violence and the pulling down of houses in America, which the friends of America in England could not justify, and which gave a great advantage to the enemies of America in that country. He was in perpetual anxiety, he wrote Thomas Cushing, lest the mad measures of mixing soldiers among a people whose minds were in such a state of irritation might be attended with some mischief, for an accidental quarrel, a personal insult, an imprudent order, an insolent execution of even a prudent one, or twenty other things might produce a tumult, unforeseen, and, therefore, impossible to be prevented,

in which such a carnage might ensue as to make a breach that could never afterwards be healed. That the insults of Wedderburn, heaped upon Franklin in the Privy Council Chamber, under circumstances, calculated to make him feel as if all England were pillorying him, and his subsequent dismissal from the office of Deputy Postmaster-General for America, exerted some degree of corrosive influence upon his mind cannot be denied; but he still kept up his counsels of patience to his people upon the other side of the Atlantic until patience no longer had any meaning, and, when his last efforts, just before he left England for Independence Hall, to bring about a satisfactory adjustment of the quarrel between Great Britain and her colonies finally came to nothing, the tears that Priestley tells us wet his cheeks, as he was leaving England, were proof enough that even a nature, little given to weakness, might well grow faint at the thought of such a tragic separation as that of England and the thirteen colonies nurtured at her breast. But no one can read the life of Franklin without feeling that there never was a time when his heart was not wholly true to the just rights of America. In America, he might miss the companionship of the learned and distinguished friends from whose conversation he derived so much profit and pleasure in England and France. Only such a capital as London or Paris could fully gratify the social and intellectual wants of a man whose survey of human existence was so little subject to cramping restrictions of any kind. But it was the very breadth of Franklin's character which made him first of all an American, instinct with the free spirit of the New World, and faithful to the democratic institutions and ideals, which throve on its freshness and exemption from inherited complications. Over and over again, when he is abroad, he compares the economic and political conditions of his own country with those of foreign countries to the marked

disadvantage of the latter. The painful impression, left upon his mind by the squalor and misery of the lower orders of the Irish people, is manifest enough in his correspondence.

Ireland is in itself [he declared in a letter to Thomas Cushing] a poor Country, and Dublin a magnificent City; but the appearances of general extreme poverty among the lower people are amazing. They live in wretched hovels of mud and straw, are clothed in rags, and subsist chiefly on potatoes. Our New England farmers, of the poorest sort, in regard to the Enjoyment of all the Comforts of life, are princes when compared to them. Such is the effect of the discouragements of industry, the non-residence not only of pensioners, but of many original landlords, who lease their lands in gross to undertakers that rack the tenants and fleece them skin and all to make estates to themselves, while the first rents, as well as most of the pensions, are spent out of the country. An English gentleman there said to me, that by what he had heard of the good grazing in North America, and by what he saw of the plenty of flax-seed imported in Ireland from thence, he could not understand why we did not rival Ireland in the beef and butter trade to the West Indies, and share with it in its linen trade. But he was satisfied when I told him that I supposed the reason might be, *our people eat beef and butter every day, and wear shirts themselves.*

In short, the chief exports of Ireland seem to be pinched off the backs and out of the bellies of the miserable inhabitants.

Darker and more forbidding still glooms the background of the joyous hours spent by Franklin in Ireland, Scotland and England in these painful words which he wrote to Dr. Joshua Babcock in the early part of 1772:

I have lately made a Tour thro' Ireland and Scotland. In those Countries a small Part of the Society are Landlords, great Noblemen, and Gentlemen, extreamly opulent, living in the highest Affluence and Magnificence: The Bulk of the People Tenants, extreamly poor, living in the most sordid

Wretchedness, in dirty Hovels of Mud and Straw, and cloathed only in Rags.

I thought often of the Happiness of New England, where every Man is a Freeholder, has a Vote in publick Affairs, lives in a tidy, warm House, has plenty of good Food and Fewel, with whole cloaths from Head to Foot, the Manufacture perhaps of his own Family. Long may they continue in this Situation! But if they should ever envy the Trade of these Countries, I can put them in a Way to obtain a Share of it. Let them with three fourths of the People of Ireland live the Year round on Potatoes and Buttermilk, without shirts, then may their Merchants export Beef, Butter, and Linnen. Let them, with the Generality of the Common People of Scotland, go Barefoot, then may they make large exports in Shoes and Stockings: And if they will be content to wear Rags, like the Spinners and Weavers of England, they may make Cloths and Stuffs for all Parts of the World.

Farther, if my Countrymen should ever wish for the honour of having among them a gentry enormously wealthy, let them sell their Farms & pay rack'd Rents; the Scale of the Landlords will rise as that of the Tenants is depress'd, who will soon become poor, tattered, dirty, and abject in Spirit. Had I never been in the American Colonies, but was to form my Judgment of Civil Society by what I have lately seen, I should never advise a Nation of Savages to admit of Civilization: For I assure you, that, in the Possession & Enjoyment of the various Comforts of Life, compar'd to these People every Indian is a Gentleman: And the Effect of this kind of Civil Society seems only to be, the depressing Multitudes below the Savage State that a few may be rais'd above it.

America on the other hand, as Franklin pictured it, was the land of neither the very rich nor the very poor, but one in which "a general happy mediocrity" prevailed. It was not a Lubberland, nor a Pays de Cocagne, where the streets were paved with half-peck loaves, and the houses tiled with pancakes, and where the fowls flew about ready roasted, crying Come eat me! These were

all wild imaginations. On the contrary, it was a land of labor, but also a land where multitudes of emigrants from foreign lands, who would never have emerged from poverty, if they had remained at home, had, with savings out of the wages, earned by them, after they arrived in America, acquired land, and, in a few years, become wealthy farmers. It was a land, too, where religious infidelity was unknown, and where all the means of education were plenteous, the general manners simple and pure, and the temptations to vice and folly fewer than in England.

The contrast between political conditions in Great Britain and political conditions in America was in Franklin's opinion equally unfavorable to Great Britain. Loyal as he was to the King, attached as he was to the English people, he harbored a deep feeling of aversion and contempt for the Parliament which he did not realize was but the marionette of the King. When certain residents of Oxford, after being confined for some days in Newgate for corrupt practices, knelt before the Speaker of the House of Commons, and received his reprimand, Franklin wrote to Galloway:

> The House could scarcely keep countenances, knowing as they all do, that the practice is general. People say, they mean nothing more than to *beat down the price* by a little discouragement of borough jobbing, now that their own elections are all coming on. The price indeed is grown exorbitant, no less than *four thousand pounds* for a member.

In the same letter, a grim story is told of the callous levity with which the Parliamentary majority regarded its own debasement. It was founded upon a bill brought in by Beckford for preventing bribery and corruption at elections, which contained a clause obliging every member to swear, on his admission to the House, that he had not directly or indirectly given any bribe to any elector. This clause was so generally opposed as answering no

end except that of inducing the members to perjure themselves that it was withdrawn. Commenting on the incident, Franklin said:

> It was indeed a cruel contrivance of his, worse than the gunpowder plot; for that was only to blow the Parliament up to heaven, this to sink them all down to ——. Mr. Thurlow opposed his bill by a long speech. Beckford, in reply, gave a dry hit to the House, that is repeated everywhere. "The honourable gentleman," says he, "in his learned discourse, gave us first one definition of corruption, then he gave us another definition of corruption, and I think he was about to give us a third. Pray does that gentleman imagine *there is any member of this House that does not* KNOW what corruption is?" which occasioned only a roar of laughter, for they are so hardened in the practice, that they are very little ashamed of it.

Later Franklin wrote to Galloway that it was thought that near two million pounds would be spent in the Parliamentary election then pending, but that it was computed that the Crown had *two millions a year in places and pensions to dispose of*. On the same day, he wrote to his son, "In short, this whole venal nation is now at market, will be sold for about two millions, and might be bought out of the hands of the present bidders (if he would offer half a million more) by the very Devil himself." To Thomas Cushing he wrote that luxury brought most of the Commons as well as Lords to market, and that, if America would save for three or four years the money she spent in the fashions and fineries and fopperies of England, she might buy the whole Parliament, minister and all.

Over against these depraved electoral conditions he was in the habit of placing the simpler and purer conditions of his native land. In most of the Colonies, he declared in his *Rise and Progress of the Differences between Great*

Britain and her American Colonies, there was no such thing as standing candidate for election. There was neither treating nor bribing. No man expressed the least inclination to be chosen. Instead of humble advertisements, entreating votes and interest, one saw before every new election requests of former members, acknowledging the honor done them by preceding elections, but setting forth their long service and attendance on the public business in that station, and praying that in consideration thereof some other person might be chosen in their room. After a dissolution, the same representatives might be and usually were re-elected without asking a vote or giving even a glass of cider to an elector. On the eve of his return to America in 1775, the contrast between the extreme corruption prevalent in the old rotten state and the glorious public virtue, so predominant in rising America, as he expressed it, assumed a still more aggravated form. After mentioning in his last letter to his friend Galloway the "Numberless and needless Places, enormous Salaries, Pensions, Perquisites, Bribes, groundless Quarrels, foolish Expeditions, false Accounts or no Accounts, Contracts and Jobbs," which in England devoured all revenue, and produced continual necessity in the midst of natural plenty, he said:

I apprehend, therefore, that to unite us intimately will only be to corrupt and poison us also. It seems like Mezentius's coupling and binding together the dead and the living.

> "Tormenti genus, et sanie taboque fluentes,
> Complexu in misero, longâ sic morte necabat."

However [he added with his readily re-awakened loyalty to the mother country], I would try anything, and bear anything that can be borne with Safety to our just Liberties, rather than engage in a War with such near relations, unless compelled to it by dire Necessity in our own Defence.

Nor was any American of Franklin's time more profoundly conscious than he of the growing power and splendid destiny of the Colonies. His familiarity with America was singularly minute and accurate. He had supped at its inns and sojourned in its homes, been delayed at its ferries and crippled on its roads. In one way or another, he had acquired a correct and searching insight into almost everything that related to its political, social and industrial life. His answers to the questions put to him during his famous examination before the House of Lords have been justly reputed to be among the most striking of all the proofs of ability that he ever gave, marked as they were by great wisdom and acuteness, marvellous conciseness as well as clearness of statement, invincible tact and dexterity. But in no respect are these answers more remarkable than in the knowledge that they display of colonial America in all its relations. Accompanying this knowledge, too, was unquestionably a powerful feeling of affection for the land of his birth which renders us more or less skeptical as to whether he was at all certain of himself on the different occasions when he expressed his willingness to die in some other land than his own.

I have indeed [he wrote to his son from England in 1772] so many good kind Friends here, that I could spend the Remainder of my Life among them with great Pleasure, if it were not for my American connections, & the indelible Affection I retain for that dear Country, from which I have so long been in a State of Exile.

At all times the tread of those coming millions of human beings, which the family fecundity of America made certain, sounded majestically in his ears. Referring to America in a letter to Lord Kames in the year after the repeal of the Stamp Act, he employed these significant words:

She may suffer at present under the arbitrary power of this country; she may suffer for a while in a separation from it; but these are temporary evils that she will outgrow. Scotland and Ireland are differently circumstanced. Confined by the sea, they can scarcely increase in numbers, wealth and strength, so as to overbalance England. But America, an immense territory, favoured by Nature with all advantages of climate, soil, great navigable rivers, and lakes, &c. must become a great country, populous and mighty; and will, in a less time than is generally conceived, be able to shake off any shackles that may be imposed on her, and perhaps place them on the imposers. In the mean time, every act of oppression will sour their tempers, lessen greatly, if not annihilate the profits of your commerce with them, and hasten their final revolt; for the seeds of liberty are universally found there, and nothing can eradicate them.

Even, if confined westward by the Mississippi and northward by the St. Lawrence and the Lakes, he thought that, in some centuries, the population of America would amount to one hundred millions of people.

Such were the prepossessions brought by Franklin to the controversy between Great Britain and her colonies. In his view he was none the less an Englishman because he was an American, and, as the controversy gained in rancor, his dual allegiance to the two countries led to no little misconstruction. To an unknown correspondent he wrote several years after the repeal of the Stamp Act that he was becoming weary of talking and writing about the quarrel, "especially," he said, "as I do not find that I have gained any point, in either country, except that of rendering myself suspected by my impartiality; in England, of being too much an American, and in America, of being too much an Englishman."

His view of the legal tie between England and the Colonies was very simple. How, he wrote to William Franklin, the people of Boston could admit that the

General Court of Massachusetts was subordinate to Parliament, and yet, in the same breath, deny the power of Parliament to enact laws for them, he could not understand; nor could he understand what bounds the Farmer's Letters set to the authority in Parliament, which they conceded, to "regulate the trade of the Colonies." It was difficult, he thought, to draw lines between duties for regulation and those for revenue; and, if Parliament was to be the judge, it seemed to him that the distinction would amount to little. Two years previously, however, when examined before the House of Commons, he had stated that, while the right of a Parliament in which the colonies were not represented to impose an internal tax upon them was generally denied in America, he had never heard any objection urged in America to duties laid by Parliament to regulate commerce; and, when he was asked whether there was any kind of difference between the two taxes to the colonies on which they might be laid, he had a prompt answer:

> I think the difference is very great. An external tax is a duty laid on commodities imported; that duty is added to the first cost and other charges on the commodity, and, when it is offered to sale, makes a part of the price. If the people do not like it at that price, they refuse it; they are not obliged to pay it. But an internal tax is forced from the people without their consent, if not laid by their own representatives.

And then, when asked immediately afterwards whether, if the external tax or duty was laid on the necessaries of life imported into Pennsylvania, that would not be the same thing in its effects as an internal tax, he doubtless filled the minds of his more insular auditors with astonishment by replying, "I do not know a single article imported into the Northern Colonies, but what they can either do without, or make themselves."

Another neat answer in the examination was his answer

when asked whether there was any kind of difference between a duty on the importation of goods and an excise on their consumption:

> Yes, a very material one; an excise, for the reasons I have just mentioned, they (the colonists) think you can have no right to lay within their country. But the sea is yours; you maintain, by your fleets, the safety of navigation in it, and keep it clear of pirates; you may have therefore a natural and equitable right to some toll or duty on merchandizes carried through that part of your dominions, towards defraying the expence you are at in ships to maintain the safety of that carriage.

Finally he grew weary of the repeated effort to fix the reproach of inconsistency upon the colonies because of their acquiescence in Parliamentary regulation of their commerce; and, when asked whether Pennsylvania might not, by the same interpretation of her charter, object to external as well as internal taxation without representation, he replied:

> They never have hitherto. Many arguments have been lately used here to show them, that there is no difference, and that, if you have no right to tax them internally, you have none to tax them externally, or make any other law to bind them. At present they do not reason so; but in time they may possibly be convinced by these arguments.

Nearly ten years later, Franklin had in a conversation with Lord Chatham at his country seat a notable opportunity to say something further with respect to Parliamentary regulations of American commerce. On this occasion, the great English statesman, then earnestly engaged in a last effort to avert the approaching rupture, observed that the opinion prevailed in England that America aimed at setting up for itself as an independent state; or at least getting rid of the Navigation Acts; and

Franklin assured him that, having more than once travelled almost from one end of the continent to the other, and kept a great variety of company, eating, drinking and conversing with them freely, he never had heard in any conversation from any person, drunk or sober, the least expression of a wish for a separation, or hint that such a thing would be advantageous to America. And, as to the Navigation Act, he said that the main material part of it, that of carrying on trade in British or Plantation bottoms, excluding foreign ships from colonial ports, and navigating with three fourths British seamen was as acceptable to America as it could be to Britain. Indeed, he declared, America was not even against regulations of the general commerce by Parliament, provided such regulations were *bona fide* for the benefit of the whole empire, not for the small advantage of one part to the great injury of another, such as obliging American ships to call in England with their wine and fruit from Portugal or Spain, the restraints on American manufactures in the woollen and hat-making branches, the prohibiting of slitting-mills, steel-works and the like.

In the opinion of Franklin, Great Britain and America were legally connected as England and Scotland were before the Union by having one common sovereign. He denied that the instructions of the King had the force of law in the Colonies, as Lord Granville had contended, or that the King and Parliament had any legislative authority over them. "Something," he told his son, "might be made of either of the extremes; that Parliament has a power to make *all laws* for us, or that it has a power to make *no laws* for us; and I think the arguments for the latter more numerous and weighty than those for the former." The King with his Plantation Parliaments was, in his opinion, the sole legislator of his American subjects, and, in that capacity, was, and ought to be, free to exercise his own judgment, unrestrained and

unlimited by the English Parliament.[1] That the Colonies were originally constituted distinct states and intended to be continued such, was clear to him, he wrote to Dr. Cooper, from a thorough consideration of their first charters and the whole conduct of the crown and nation towards them until the Restoration. Since that time Parliament had usurped an authority of making laws for them which before it had not, and America had for some time submitted to the usurpation partly through ignorance and inattention and partly from its weakness and inability to contend. He wished therefore that such expressions as "the supreme authority of Parliament," "the subordinacy of our Assemblies to the Parliament" and the like were no longer employed in the colonies. These opinions were formed at a time when he labored under the egregious error of supposing that, in spite of the wicked machinations of his Parliament, the King regarded his colonies with the eye of mild paternal favor; but they remained his opinions long after he ceased to be the cheat of this delusion.

How far Franklin's idea of the legal bond between Great Britain and the Colonies was a correct one is a technical inquiry that we need not discuss; but his conception of the solidarity of interests which should exist between all parts of the British Empire was as generous and glowing as any federal rhapsodist of the present day could form.

[1] The view that Franklin took of the constitutional tie between Great Britain and America was expressed in many different forms. One of the concisest is to be found in a letter to his grand-nephew Jonathan Williams, dated Feb. 12, 1786, and, therefore, written after the tie, whatever its exact nature was, had become a subject for the historian rather than the politician. Speaking of a controversy in which Williams had been involved, he says: "It seems to me that instead of discussing *When* we ceas'd to be British Subjects you should have deny'd our *ever having been such.* We were Subjects to the King of G. Britain, as were also the Irish, the Jersey and Guernsey People and the Hanoverians, but we were American Subjects as they were Irish, Jersey and Hanoverian Subjects. None are British Subjects but those under the Parliament of Britain."

When he expounded it to Lord Chatham at Hayes, the latter in his grand way declared that it was a sound one, worthy of a great, benevolent and comprehensive mind. And such it was. The truth is that Franklin was an Imperialist, and the union which he saw was that of a vast English-speaking empire, made up of parts, held in harmony with each other not only by their common English heritage but also by a measure of self-government liberal enough to assure to each of them an intelligent and sympathetic administration of its particular interests. Until the colonial history of England began, all great empires, he told Lord Chatham, had crumbled first at their extremities, because

> Countries remote from the Seat and Eye of Government which therefore could not well understand their Affairs for want of full and true Information, had never been well governed but had been oppress'd by bad Governors, on Presumption that Complaint was difficult to be made and supported against them at such a distance.

Had this process of disintegration not been invited in recent years by wrong politics (which would have Parliament to be omnipotent, though it ought not to be so unless it could at the same time be omniscient) they might have gone on extending their Western Empire, adding Province to Province, as far as the South Sea.

> It has long appeared to me [he said in his *Tract relative to the Affair of Hutchinson's Letters*], that the only true British Politicks were those which aim'd at the Good of the *Whole British Empire*, not that which sought the Advantage of *one Part* in the Disadvantage of the others; therefore all Measures of procuring Gain to the Mother Country arising from Loss to her Colonies, and all of Gain to the Colonies arising from or occasioning Loss to Britain, especially where the Gain was small and the Loss great, every Abridgment of the Power of the Mother Country, where that Power was not prejudicial

to the Liberties of the Colonists, and every Diminution of the Privileges of the Colonists, where they were not prejudicial to the Welfare of the Mo. Country, I, in my own Mind, condemned as improper, partial, unjust, and mischievous; tending to create Dissensions, and weaken that Union, on which the Strength, Solidity, and Duration of the Empire greatly depended; and I opposed, as far as my little Powers went, all Proceedings, either here or in America, that in my Opinion had such Tendency.

But in no words of Franklin is his inspiring idea of British unity more strikingly expressed than in one of his letters to Lord Howe during the Revolutionary War.

Long did I endeavour, with unfeigned and unwearied Zeal [was his touching language] to preserve from breaking that fine and noble China Vase, the British Empire; for I knew, that, being once broken, the separate Parts could not retain even their Shares of the Strength and Value that existed in the Whole, and that a perfect Reunion of those Parts could scarce ever be hoped for. Your Lordship may possibly remember the tears of Joy that wet my Cheek, when, at your good Sister's in London, you once gave me Expectations that a Reconciliation might soon take place.

That there was only one way in which the fair vase upon which his eye lingered so fondly and proudly could for certainty be preserved from irreparable ruin, namely, by admitting the colonies to representation in the British Parliament, Franklin saw with perfect clearness. Repeatedly the thought of such a union emerges from his correspondence only to be dismissed as impracticable. As far back as 1766, he wrote from London to Cadwallader Evans these pregnant words:

My private opinion concerning a union in Parliament between the two countries is, that it would be best for the whole.

But I think it will never be done. For though I believe, that, if we had no more representatives than Scotland has, we should be sufficiently strong in the House to prevent, as they do for Scotland, anything ever passing to our disadvantage; yet we are not able at present to furnish and maintain such a number, and, when we are more able, we shall be less willing than we are now. The Parliament here do at present think too highly of themselves to admit representatives from us, if we should ask it; and, when they will be desirous of granting it, we shall think too highly of ourselves to accept of it. It would certainly contribute to the strength of the whole, if Ireland and all the dominions were united and consolidated under one common council for general purposes, each retaining its particular council or parliament for its domestic concerns. But this should have been more early provided for. In the infancy of our foreign establishments it was neglected, or was not thought of. And now the affair is nearly in the situation of Friar Bacon's project of making a brazen wall round England for its eternal security. His servant, Friar Bungey, slept while the brazen head, which was to dictate how it might be done, said *Time is*, and *Time was*. He only waked to hear it say, *Time is past.* An explosion followed, that tumbled their house about the conjuror's ears.

In a subsequent letter to his son in 1768, Franklin again indulges the same day dream, and again reaches the conclusion that such a union would be the best for the whole, and that, though particular parts might find particular disadvantages in it, they would find greater advantages in the security arising to every part from the increased strength of the whole. But such a union, he concluded, was not likely to take place, while the nature of the existing relation was so little understood on both sides of the water, and sentiments concerning it remained so widely different.

Nothing, therefore, remained for Franklin to do except to fall back upon this relation and to make the best of it, to insist that the only constitutional tie between England

and the Colonies was the King, and that Parliament had no more right to tax America than to tax Hanover, though the legislative assemblies of the colonies would always be ready in the future as they had been in the past to honor the requisitions for pecuniary aids made upon them by the King, through his Secretary of State; to combat the political and economic dogmas and the national prejudices which stood in the way of the full recognition by England of the fact that her true interest was to be found in the liberal treatment of the Colonies; to warn the Colonies that their connection with England was attended with too many obligations and advantages to be hastily or prematurely forfeited by rash resentments, so long as there was any definite prospect of their appeal to English self-interest and good-feeling not proving in vain; and finally to couple the warning with the suggestion that they should unceasingly keep up the assertion of their just rights, and be prepared, all else failing, to maintain them with an unabated military spirit. It was not to be expected of a man so conservative and constant in nature, and bound to England by so many strong and endearing associations, that he should wage a solitary combat for American rights on English soil before he or any man had reason to know how bitterly the Stamp Act would be returned upon the head of Parliament by America, but never, after the temper of his countrymen in regard to it, was made manifest to him, were his elbows again out of touch with those of his compatriots in America. To their assistance and to the assistance as well of the great body of wise and generous Englishmen, who loved liberty too much at home to begrudge it to Englishmen in America, he brought his every resource, his scientific fame, his social gifts, his personal popularity, his knowledge of the world and the levers by which it is moved, the sane, searching mind, too full of light for bigotry, superstition, or confusion, the pen that enlisted

satirical point as readily as grave dissertation in the service of instruction. It cannot be doubted that his exertions should be reckoned among the potent influences that secured the repeal of the Stamp Act. To Charles Thomson he wrote that he had reprinted everything from America that he thought might help their common cause. His examination before the House of Commons was published and had a great run. "You guessed aright," he wrote to Lord Kames with regard to the repeal, "in supposing that I would not be a *mute in that play*. I was extremely busy, attending Members of both Houses, informing, explaining, consulting, disputing, in a continual hurry from morning to night, till the affair was happily ended."

Some years after the repeal of the Stamp Act, he wrote to Jane Mecom that, at the time of the repeal, the British Ministry were ready to hug him for the assistance that he had afforded them in bringing it about. From the time of the repeal until he returned to America in 1775, his one absorbing object was to create a better understanding between England and her colonies, and to avert the possibility of war between them. Among the things with which he had to contend in accomplishing his aims was the haughty spirit in which the English people were disposed to look down upon the colonists, and to resent any manifestation of independence upon their part as insolent. It was this spirit which made him feel that the assent of England would never be obtained to the representation of America in Parliament.

I am fully persuaded with you [he wrote to Lord Kames], that a *Consolidating Union*, by a fair and equal representation of all the parts of this Empire in Parliament, is the only firm basis on which its political grandeur and prosperity can be founded. Ireland once wished it, but now rejects it. The time has been, when the colonies might have been pleased with it; they are now *indifferent* about it; and if it is much

longer delayed, they too will *refuse it.* But the pride of this people can not bear the thought of it, and therefore it will be delayed. Every man in England seems to consider himself as a piece of a sovereign over America; seems to jostle himself into the throne with the King, and talks of *our subjects in the Colonies.*

This was the sentiment of England in general. In the guard-room and barracks, it assumed at times the grosser form of such contempt as that which led General Clarke to believe as we have seen that the emasculation of all the male Americans would be little more than a holiday task for a handful of British grenadiers. Along with this haughty spirit went a crass ignorance of America and Americans which Franklin despaired of ever enlightening except by good-natured ridicule. An illustration of the manner in which he employed this agency is found in his letter to the Editor of a Newspaper. It had been claimed, he said, that factories in America were impossible because American sheep had but little wool, and the dearness of American labor rendered the profitable working of iron and other materials, except in some few coarse instances, impracticable.

Dear Sir [was his reply], do not let us suffer ourselves to be amus'd with such groundless Objections. The very Tails of the American Sheep are so laden with Wooll, that each has a little Car or Waggon on four little Wheels, to support & keep it from trailing on the Ground. Would they caulk their Ships, would they fill their Beds, would they even litter their Horses with Wooll, if it were not both plenty and cheap? And what signifies Dearness of Labour, when an English shilling passes for five and Twenty? Their engaging 300 Silk Throwsters here in one Week, for New York, was treated as a Fable, because, forsooth, they have "no Silk there to throw." Those, who made this Objection, perhaps did not know, that at the same time the Agents from the King of Spain were at Quebec to contract for 1000 Pieces of Cannon

to be made there for the Fortification of Mexico, and at N York engaging the annual Supply of woven Floor-Carpets for their West India Houses, other Agents from the Emperor of China were at Boston treating about an Exchange of raw Silk for Wooll, to be carried in Chinese Junks through the Straits of Magellan.

Another thing, with which Franklin had to contend, was the misrepresentations that the colonial governors were constantly making about American conditions. These misrepresentations were in keeping with the unworthy character of some of them and with the transitory relation that almost all of them bore to the Colonies, of which they were the executives. What the Americans truly thought of them is pointedly expressed in Franklin's *Causes of the American Discontents.*

They say then as to Governors [he declared], that they are not like Princes whose posterity have an inheritance in the Government of a nation, and therefore an interest in its prosperity; they are generally strangers to the Provinces they are sent to govern, have no estate, natural connexion, or relation there, to give them an affection for the country; that they come only to make money as fast as they can; are sometimes men of vicious characters and broken fortunes, sent by a Minister merely to get them out of the way; that as they intend staying in the country no longer than their government continues, and purpose to leave no family behind them, they are apt to be regardless of the good-will of the people, and care not what is said or thought of them after they are gone.

That such men were biased and untrustworthy witnesses touching American conditions goes without saying, but, when discontent became deeply implanted in the breasts of the colonists, their partisan and perverted reports to the English Government as to the state of America did much to mislead their masters. The burden of these reports as a rule was that the disaffected were

few in numbers and persons of little consequence, that the colonists of property and social standing were satisfied, and inclined to submit to Parliamentary taxation, that it was impossible to establish manufacturing industries in America, and that, if Parliament would only steadily persist in the exercise of its legislative authority over America, the non-importation agreements and other defensive measures adopted by its people would be abandoned.

But the most intractable of all the obstacles with which Franklin had to contend was the policy of commercial and industrial restriction, partly the result of economic purblindness, peculiar to the time, and partly the result of sheer selfishness, which England relentlessly pursued in her relations to the colonies. Every suggestion that this policy should be relaxed was met by its more extreme champions, such as George Grenville, with the statement that the Acts of Navigation were the very Palladium of England. On no account were the Colonies to be allowed to import wine, oil and fruit directly from Spain and Portugal, or even to import iron directly from foreign countries. Enlarged as was the understanding of Lord Chatham himself, it could not tolerate the thought that America should be permitted to convert any form of crude material into manufactured products. Every hat made in America, every shipload of emigrants that left the shores of England for America, was jealously regarded as signifying so much pecuniary loss to England. The colonists were to be mere *adscripti glebæ*, mere tillers of the American soil for the purpose of wringing from it the price of the manufactured commodities, with which they were to be exclusively supplied by the factories and shops of the mother country. The idea that, in any other sense, the expanding numbers and wealth of America could inure to the benefit of England, was one that seemed to be wholly foreign to its consciousness. To

this Little England Franklin steadfastly opposed his conception of an Imperial England, based upon the freedom of all its parts to contribute to the wealth and importance of the whole by the full enjoyment of all their peculiar natural gifts and advantages.

No one can more sincerely rejoice than I do [he wrote to Lord Kames in 1760], on the reduction of Canada; and this is not merely as I am a colonist, but as I am a Briton. I have long been of opinion, that the *foundations of the future grandeur and stability of the British Empire lie in America;* and though, like other foundations, they are low and little seen, they are, nevertheless, broad and strong enough to support the greatest political structure human wisdom ever yet erected.

These words, splendid as was the vision by which they were illumined, were but the utterance in another form of the thought that he had expressed nine years before in America in his essay on the *Increase of Mankind.* Speaking of the population of the colonies at that time he said:

This Million doubling, suppose but once in 25 years, will, in another Century, be more than the People of *England*, and the greatest Number of *Englishmen* will be on this Side the Water. What an Accession of Power to the *British Empire* by Sea as well as Land! What Increase of Trade and Navigation! What Numbers of Ships and Seamen! We have been here but little more than 100 years, and yet the Force of our Privateers in the late War, united, was greater, both in Men and Guns, than that of the whole *British* Navy in Queen *Elizabeth's* time.

Indeed so fully possessed was he even as late as 1771 with the federative spirit, which has brought recruits from Canada and Australia to the side of England in recent wars that, after urging upon Thomas Cushing the importance of a well-disciplined militia being maintained

by Massachusetts, for her protection against invasion by a foreign foe, he added, "And what a Glory would it be for us to send, on any trying Occasion, ready and effectual Aid to our Mother Country!" It is only by reading such words as these that we can begin to divine what the divulsion of England and America has really meant to the vast host of human beings throughout the world who speak the English tongue.

To all the shallow sophistries or sottish errors, that tended to falsify his glorious dream of world-wide British unity, Franklin presented a merciless intellect. With regard to the intention of Parliament to tax the colonies, he had these pointed words to say in a letter to Peter Collinson in 1764: "What we get above a Subsistence we lay out with you for your Manufactures.

"Therefore what you get from us in Taxes you must lose in Trade. The Cat can yield but her skin."

Even more acute was his letter to the *Public Advertiser* on a proposed Act to prevent emigration from England. Such an Act, he declared, was unnecessary, impracticable, impolitic and unjust. What is more, with an insight into the laws governing population, superior to that of any man of his time, he made his assertions good. To illustrate this claim in part, we need go no further than what he had to say about the necessity of the Act.

As long as the new situation shall be *far* preferable to the old [he said], the emigration may possibly continue. But when many of those, who at home interfered with others of the same rank (in the competition for farms, shops, business, offices, and other means of subsistence), are gradually withdrawn, the inconvenience of that competition ceases; the number remaining no longer half starve each other; they find they can now subsist comfortably, and though perhaps not quite so well as those who have left them, yet, the inbred attachment to a native country is sufficient to overbalance a moderate difference; and thus the emigration ceases natu-

rally. The waters of the ocean may move in currents from one quarter of the globe to another, as they happen in some places to be accumulated, and in others diminished; but no law, beyond the law of gravity, is necessary to prevent their abandoning any coast entirely. Thus the different degrees of happiness of different countries and situations find, or rather make, their level by the flowing of people from one to another; and where that level is once found, the removals cease. Add to this, that even a real deficiency of people in any country, occasioned by a wasting war or pestilence, is speedily supplied by earlier and more prolific marriages, encouraged by the greater facility of obtaining the means of subsistence. So that a country half depopulated would soon be repeopled, till the means of subsistence were equalled by the population. All increase beyond that point must perish, or flow off into more favourable situations. Such overflowings there have been of mankind in all ages, or we should not now have had so many nations. But to apprehend absolute depopulation from that cause, and call for a law to prevent it, is calling for a law to stop the Thames, lest its waters, by what leave it daily at Gravesend, should be quite exhausted.

Twenty-three years before he had stated the same truths more sententiously in his essay on the *Increase of Mankind.*

In fine [he said in that essay] a Nation well regulated is like a Polypus; take away a Limb, its Place is soon supply'd; cut it in two, and each deficient Part shall speedily grow out of the Part remaining. Thus if you have Room and Subsistence enough, as you may by dividing, make ten Polypes out of one, you may of one make ten Nations, equally populous and powerful; or rather increase a Nation ten fold in Numbers and Strength.

Franklin clearly saw that, with the increase of population in the colonies, the demand for British manufactures would increase *pari passu*, and that, with the increased

demand for them, the population of Great Britain would increase, perhaps, tenfold. Much as he made of the economic conditions that tended to give a purely agricultural direction to the energies of America, he laughed to scorn the idea that America would always remain in a state of industrial subjection to England.

Only consider *the rate of our Increase* [he wrote to Peter Collinson, after stating that it was folly to expect that America would always be supplied with cloth by England] and tell me if you can increase your Wooll in that Proportion, and where, in your little Island you can feed the Sheep. Nature has put Bounds to your Abilities, tho' none to your Desires. Britain would, if she could, manufacture & trade for all the World; England for all Britain;—London for all England;—and every Londoner for all London. So selfish is the human Mind! But 'tis well there is One above that rules these Matters with a more equal Hand.

The agency that Franklin held for Pennsylvania in the first instance, and the agencies that he afterwards held for Massachusetts, New Jersey and Georgia, too, afforded him a solid standing for influencing public opinion both in England and America. He was actually in England, and, at the same time, in incessant correspondence with the popular leaders in America. With the beginning of the agitation for the repeal of the Stamp Act he entered upon a course of political activity which added greatly, in another form, to the reputation already acquired by him as a man of science. For his services in securing the repeal, including the flood of light that his answers, when examined before the House of Commons, shed upon the points at issue between the two countries, he was repaid by the English Ministry with attentions which he describes by a term as strong as "caress." Even when the dust of the conflict had thickened, and popular sentiment in England had ranged itself more and more on the side

of the King and Parliament, his advice was still eagerly sought by Chatham, Camden, Shelburne and Burke and other liberal and sagacious English statesmen, when they were vainly striving in opposition to restore sanity to the distracted counsels that were menacing the security of the Empire.[1] Those must have been proud moments for Franklin, when the elder Pitt, whom he had come to regard in the earlier stages of his maturer life in England as an "inaccessible," received him as an honored guest under his roof at Hayes, or conferred with him at No. 7 Craven Street, or delivered him to the doorkeepers in the House of Lords, saying aloud, "This is Dr. Franklin, whom I would have admitted into the House." There have been few men who might not have envied the privilege of intimate communion with a man not greater, when he was making his country the mistress of the world, than, when decrepit, and in a hopeless minority, he rose in the House of Lords to plead with a voice, inspired not only by his own matchless eloquence but by all that was best in the history and temper of England for the removal of His Majesty's troops from the town of Boston. On the other side of the Atlantic, too, as the final catastrophe drew nearer, Franklin acquired a position, as the champion of the Colonies, which led Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts to say of the memorable report, made by a committee to the town meeting, held in Boston on November 20, 1772, that "although at its first appearance it was considered as their own work, yet they had little more to do than to make the necessary alterations in the arrangement of materials prepared for them by their great director in England, whose counsels they obeyed, and in whose wisdom and dexterity they had an implicit faith."

[1] "Your medallion is in good company; it is placed with those of Lord Chatham, Lord Camden, Marquis of Rockingham, Sir George Saville, and some others, who honoured me with a show of friendly regard, when in England."

(Letter from Franklin to Geo. Whatley, May 18, 1787.)

And with entire truth it can be said that, until war became inevitable, Franklin used his influence in both countries with the unwavering purpose of promoting the best interests of both. The representation of America in Parliament at that time he saw was impracticable, and it is hard to believe, though the imbecility of a government without a sanction had not yet been forced upon his attention by the Articles of Confederation, that so practical a man could have had much faith in the steady efficacy of mere requisitions for aids by the Crown on the colonial assemblies. But, within the limits set him by the insurmountable barriers of the hour, it can not be doubted, bold as such an assertion may be, that the wisest thing that both England and the Colonies could have done, if such an idea is conceivable, would have been to leave the controversy between them to his sole arbitration. The most striking tribute that can be paid to the wisdom and open-mindedness of Franklin is to say that, if this had been done, an accommodation would unquestionably have been reached with due regard to the honor, dignity and essential interests of both countries. His attitude in England was that of a loyal friend to both parties to the controversy, who, as he viewed it, had no cause for disagreement that a temperate and sensible man would not know how readily to remove. To the British public he addressed with numerous variations the following arguments: Notwithstanding the rapid increase of population in America, its area was so vast, and contained so much vacant land, that even such artisans as it had soon drifted into the possession and cultivation of land. The danger, therefore, of industrial competition between the two countries was very remote. The people of America, however, would multiply so rapidly that, in the course of a brief time, the demand for manufactures would increase to such an extent that Great Britain would be powerless alone to supply it. He had satisfied himself

by an inspection of the cloth factories in Yorkshire that, with a population doubling as did that of America every twenty-five years, Great Britain would in the future be unable to keep the Americans clothed. It was not right that the interests of a particular class of British merchants, tradesmen or artificers should outweigh those of all the King's subjects in the Colonies. Iron was to be found everywhere in America, and beaver furs were the natural productions of that country; hats, nails and steel were wanted there as well as in England. It was of no importance to the common welfare of the empire whether a subject of the King got his living by making hats on one or the other side of the water, whether he grew rich on the Thames or the Ohio, in Edinburgh or Dublin. Yet the hatters of England had obtained an act in their own favor, restraining that manufacture in America in order to oblige the Americans to send their beaver to England to be manufactured, and to purchase back the hats loaded with the charges of a double transportation. In the same manner, had a few nail-makers and a still smaller body of steel-makers (perhaps there were not a half-dozen of these in England) been able totally to forbid by an Act of Parliament the erecting of slitting mills or steel-furnaces in America. All money made by America in trade, or derived by it from fisheries, the produce of the soil or commerce, finally centred in England; yet, though America was drained of all its specie in the purchase of English goods, often mere luxuries and superfluities, she was not even allowed to issue paper money, however carefully safeguarded, to take its place. The idea that the numerous and separate colonies might become dangerous to the mother country was visionary. They were so jealous of each other that they had been wholly unable to agree upon a union for their common defence or to unite in requesting the mother country to establish one for them. The truth was that they loved England

much more than they loved each other. There remained among them so much respect, veneration and affection for Britain, that, if cultivated prudently, with kind usage, and tenderness for their privileges, they might be easily governed still for ages, without force, or any considerable expense. Parliament had no constitutional right to levy a direct tax of any kind on America. The King was the only bond between America and Great Britain. In the beginning, no claim had been made by Parliament of a right even to regulate American commerce, but the power had long been exercised by it without any objection on the part of the colonies, and could, at any rate, be reasonably defended on the ground that Great Britain was put to a great expense in policing the seas over which American commerce moved. If England felt that she could not rely upon the voluntary grants of America, to defray the charges imposed upon her by America, then the logical and proper thing to do before she levied direct taxes upon America was to provide for the representation of the Colonies in Parliament. Until that was done, if it was practicable to do it, she should confine herself to the old constitutional practice of requisitions for pecuniary aid, issued by the Secretary of State, at the instance of the Crown, to the Legislative Assemblies of America. These requisitions of a gracious King had been freely honored in the past. Indeed, the pecuniary burden of the wars, which had been carried on in America, though they were not of her kindling, had been borne by America in a larger proportion to her means than England. But to impose a stamp or tea duty upon America by Act of Parliament was simple madness. No taxes of that sort would ever be collected in America except such as were stained with blood. If Parliament, in which America was not represented, had the right to take from her a penny in a pound, what was there to hinder it from calling, whenever it pleased, for the other nineteen shillings and

eleven pence? The only result of a continued attempt to tax America would be the complete loss of her respect and affection, and all the political and commercial advantages that accompanied them. It was a mistake to heed the statements of the Colonial Governors as to the limited extent of popular disaffection in America and the inability of the Colonies to dispense with English manufactures. Their dependence was such as to render them more eager to conciliate court than colonial favor. It was also a mistake to suppose that America could not either make or forego any articles whatsoever that she was in the habit of buying from England. Men would tax themselves as heavily to gratify their resentment as their pride. The Americans had resolved to wear no more mourning, and it was now totally out of fashion with near two millions of people. They had resolved to eat no more lamb, and not a joint of lamb had since been seen on any of their tables, but the lambs themselves were all alive with the prettiest of fleeces on their backs imaginable. Look, too, at the pitiful sum of eighty pounds which was all that the odious tea duty banned by America had produced in a year to defray the expense of some hundreds of thousands of pounds incurred by England in maintaining armed ships and soldiers to support the innumerable officeholders charged with the duty of enforcing the tax.

The argument addressed by Franklin to America was equally earnest. The protection that England could afford her, the office of umpire that England could perform for her, in case of disputes between the Colonies, so that they could go on without interruption with their improvements, and increase their numbers, were the advantages that America enjoyed in her connection with England.

By the Exercise of prudent Moderation on her part, mix'd with a little Kindness [Franklin wrote to Thomas Cushing],

and by a decent Behaviour on ours, excusing where we can excuse from a Consideration of Circumstances, and bearing a little with the Infirmities of her Government, as we would with those of an aged Parent,[1] tho' firmly asserting our Privileges, and declaring that we mean at a proper time to vindicate them, this advantageous Union may still be long continued. We wish it, and we may endeavour it; but God will order it as to His Wisdom shall seem most suitable. The Friends of Liberty here, wish we may long preserve it on our side the Water, that they may find it there if adverse Events should destroy it here. They are therefore anxious and afraid, lest we should hazard it by premature Attempts in

[1] This idea is advanced also in *The Mother Country, A Song*, which Jared Sparks thought was probably written by Franklin about the time of the Stamp Act or a little later:

"We have an old mother that peevish is grown;
She snubs us like children that scarce walk alone;
She forgets we're grown up and have sense of our own;
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

If we don't obey orders, whatever the case,
She frowns, and she chides and she loses all pati-
Ence, and sometimes she hits us a slap in the face,
Which nobody can deny, etc.

Her orders so odd are, we often suspect
That age has impaired her sound intellect.
But still an old mother should have due respect,
Which nobody can deny, etc.

Let's bear with her humors as well as we can;
But why should we bear the abuse of her man?
When servants make mischief, they earn the rattan,
Which nobody should deny, etc.

Know too, ye bad neighbours, who aim to divide
The sons from the mother, that still she's our pride;
And if ye attack her we're all of her side,
Which nobody can deny, etc.

We'll join in her lawsuits, to baffle all those,
Who, to get what she has, will be often her foes;
For we know it must all be our own, when she goes,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny."

its favour. They think we may risque much by violent Measures and that the Risque is unnecessary, since a little Time must infallibly bring us all we demand or desire, and bring it us in Peace and Safety. I do not presume to advise. There are many wiser men among you, and I hope you will be directed by a still superior Wisdom.

Every personal difference Franklin contended did not justify a quarrel nor did every act of oppression on the part of the mother country justify a war. The policy, which he laid down for the Colonies, was to exercise patience and forbearance, and to look to political changes in England and their own rapidly increasing numbers and wealth for the ultimate redress of their grievances, but, in the meantime, to reaffirm fearlessly their constitutional rights on every proper occasion. This policy is again and again recommended in his letters to his friends and political correspondents over-sea. Even before the Stamp Act was actually repealed, he wrote to Charles Thomson expressing the hope that, when that happened, the behavior of America would be so prudent, decent and grateful that their friends in England would have no reason to be ashamed, and their enemies in England, who had predicted that Parliamentary indulgence would only make them more insolent and ungovernable, would find themselves, and be found, false prophets. After the repeal of the Stamp Act, in a letter to Galloway, he expressed deep regret that the English merchants, who had helped to secure that result, and to communicate the knowledge of it, at their expense to America, should feel that the Americans had proved themselves ingrates, and he accordingly said that he hoped that some decent acknowledgments or thanks would be sent to these merchants by the colonial assemblies. When the idea of taxing America was subsequently revived, he wrote to the same correspondent that he knew not what to advise, but that they should all do their endeavors on both sides

the water to lessen the present unpopularity of the American cause, conciliate the affections of the British towards them, increase by all possible means the number of their friends, and be careful not to weaken their hands, and strengthen their enemies, by rash proceedings on their side; the mischiefs of which were inconceivable. In a letter to the printer of the *Gazetteer*, signed "New England," he said: "I only hate calumniators and boutefeus on either side the water, who would for the little dirty purposes of faction, set brother against brother, turn friends into mortal enemies, and ruin an empire by dividing it." In a letter to Cadwallader Evans, in 1768, he even approved the idea that America should manufacture only such things as England neglected.

These are but scant gleanings from the numerous letters in which, down to the very last, Franklin unweariedly repeated his counsels of self-restraint to his fellow-countrymen. Accompanying them was every word of good cheer that he thought might tend to make this self-restraint easier. Several times he assured his American correspondents that, in the debate with the mother country, America had the sympathy of all Europe. For a long time, he endeavored to allay the resentment of his countrymen, under the sting of parliamentary injustice, by voicing the delusion that the King did not share the sentiments of the corrupt legislature which, as a matter of fact, he was all the time corrupting for the purpose of fostering such sentiments. Every indication of a favorable disposition towards the Colonies upon the part of the English People, during the alternations of anxiety and confidence that his mind underwent with the rise and fall of English ministries, friendly or unfriendly to America, was promptly observed by him and reported to America. At times, it is plain enough that he thought a war it would be; yet as late as 1775, when he believed that the adverse ministry of that time was tottering, his sanguine nature

reached the conclusion in a letter to James Bowdoin that the redoubled clamor of the trading, manufacturing and Whig interests in England would infallibly overthrow all the enemies of America, and produce an acknowledgment of her rights and satisfaction for her injuries. Parliament rarely gave him any occasion to speak of it except in terms of mingled amazement and indignation; but it is agreeable to remember that, in a letter in 1774 to Jane Mecom, he made grateful mention of "the generous and noble friends of America" in both houses, whose names, dear to the highest traditions of human genius and public spirit, should never be forgotten in any movement to reintegrate in some form the broken fragments of the china vase in which Franklin saw a symbol of the unity of the British Empire.

Accompanying Franklin's counsels of patience, however, was also an unceasing warning to America not to alter for a moment her posture of resistance and protest. "If under all the Insults and Oppressions you are now exposed to," he told Dr. Cooper, "you can prudently, as you have lately done, continue quiet, avoiding Tumults, but still resolutely keeping up your Claim and asserting your Rights, you will finally establish them, and this military Cloud that now blusters over you will pass away, and do no more Harm than a Summer Thunder Shower." "The Colonies," he wrote subsequently to Robert Morris and Thomas Leach, "have Adversaries enow to their common Privileges: They should endeavour to agree among themselves, and avoid everything that may make ill-Blood and promote Divisions, which must weaken them in their common Defence." To Thomas Cushing he wrote that America should continue from time to time to assert its rights in occasional solemn resolves and other public acts, never yielding them up, and avoiding even the slightest expressions that seemed confirmatory of the claim that had been set up against

them. As the end of it all became more and more obvious, his note of warning assumed an additional significance. In a letter to Thomas Cushing in 1773, he wrote:

> But our great Security lies, I think, in our growing Strength, both in Numbers and Wealth; that creates an increasing Ability of assisting this Nation in its Wars, which will make us more respectable, our Friendship more valued, and our Enmity feared; thence it will soon be thought proper to treat us not with Justice only, but with Kindness, and thence we may expect in a few Years a total Change of Measures with regard to us; unless, by a Neglect of military Discipline, we should lose all martial Spirit, and our Western People become as tame as those in the Eastern Dominions of Britain, when we may expect the same Oppressions; for there is much Truth in the Italian saying, *Make yourselves Sheep, and the Wolves will eat you.*

Indeed the almost miraculous way in which the population and wealth of America were increasing from year to year was one of the facts which entered most deeply into Franklin's calculation of the resources upon which she could rely not for the purpose of breaking away from the British connection but for the purpose of preventing it from being abused by England. No one saw more clearly than he that the day would come when some descendant, such as Gladstone, of one of his British contemporaries might well apostrophize America as a daughter that, at no very distant time, would, whether fairer or less fair, be unquestionably stronger than the mother.[1] To Thomas Cushing he wrote in 1773 that the longer England delayed the accommodation, which finally

[1] "But there can hardly be a doubt, as between the America and the England of the future, that the daughter, at some no very distant time, will, whether fairer or less fair, be unquestionably yet stronger than the mother.

" 'O matre forti filia fortior.' "

Kin Beyond Sea, by William E. Gladstone.

for her own sake she must obtain, the worse terms she might expect, since the inequality of power and importance that then subsisted between her and America was daily diminishing; while the latter's sense of her own rights and of England's injustice was continually increasing.

Optimistic on the whole, however, as was Franklin's outlook during the interval of political strife which preceded the American Revolution, intently as he watched every ebb and flow of English feeling, while this period lasted, it is manifest that in its later stages he realized that the currents upon which he was being borne were steadily moving towards the jaws of the maelstrom. This is apparent enough in his perspicacious letter of May 15, 1771, to the Committee of Correspondence in Massachusetts.

I think one may clearly see, in the system of customs to be exacted in America by act of Parliament, the seeds sown of a total disunion of the two countries, though, as yet, that event may be at a considerable distance. The course and natural progress seems to be, first, the appointment of needy men as officers, for others do not care to leave England; then, their necessities make them rapacious, their office makes them proud and insolent, their insolence and rapacity make them odious, and, being conscious that they are hated, they become malicious; their malice urges them to a continual abuse of the inhabitants in their letters to administration, representing them as disaffected and rebellious, and (to encourage the use of severity), as weak, divided, timid, and cowardly. Government believes all; thinks it necessary to support and countenance its officers; their quarreling with the people is deemed a mark and consequence of their fidelity; they are therefore more highly rewarded, and this makes their conduct still more insolent and provoking.

The resentment of the people will, at times and on particular incidents, burst into outrages and violence upon such officers, and this naturally draws down severity and acts of further oppression from hence. The more the people are dissatisfied,

the more rigor will be thought necessary; severe punishments will be inflicted to terrify; rights and privileges will be abolished; greater force will then be required to secure execution and submission; the expense will become enormous; it will then be thought proper, by fresh exactions, to make the people defray it; thence, the British nation and government will become odious, the subjection to it will de deemed no longer tolerable; war ensues, and the bloody struggle will end in absolute slavery to America, or ruin to Britain by the loss of her colonies; the latter most probable, from America's growing strength and magnitude.

But, as the whole empire must, in either case, be greatly weakened, I cannot but wish to see much patience and the utmost discretion in our general conduct, that the fatal period may be postponed, and that, whenever this catastrophe shall happen, it may appear to all mankind that the fault has not been ours.

Franklin's written comments upon the American controversy between the passage of the Stamp Act and his return to America in 1775 are usually marked by a sobriety and dignity of expression worthy of their wisdom. It is only at times that the strong character, habitually held in leash by innate prudence and severely disciplined self-control, breaks out into impatience. Naturally enough now and then he has a word of scorn for the graceless venality which made Westminster almost as much a market as Smithfield, and was, after all, the real thing that rendered England deaf to the warning "Time is" of Friar Bacon's brazen mouth-piece.

Many think the new Parliament will be for reversing the late proceedings [he wrote to Galloway in 1774], but that depends on the Court, on which every Parliament seems to be dependent; so much so, that I begin to think a Parliament here of little Use to the People: For since a Parliament is always to do as a ministry would have it, why should we not be govern'd by the Ministry in the first Instance? They could

afford to govern us cheaper, the Parliament being a very expensive Machine, that requires a vast deal of oiling and greasing at the People's Charge; for they finally pay all the enormous Salaries of Places, the Pensions, and the Bribes, now by Custom become necessary to induce the Members to vote according to their Consciences.

Franklin would have been more than human if he had not had a resentful word to say too, when, as the result of the refusal of the Americans to drink any tea, except such as was smuggled into America, free of the detested duty, by the commercial rivals of England, the East India Company could no longer meet its debts, let alone pay dividends and the annuity of four hundred thousand pounds, payable by it to the British Government, and bankruptcy was following bankruptcy like a series of falling bricks, and thousands of Spitalfield and Manchester weavers were starving, or subsisting upon charity. "Blessed Effects of Pride, Pique, and Passion in Government, which should have no Passions," was the caustic observation of Franklin in one of his letters to his son. Bitterness welled up again in his throat when, after he had been bayed by the Privy Council, and dismissed from his office, a special instruction was issued to the Governor of Massachusetts not to sign any warrant on the Treasury for the purpose of paying him any salary as the agent of Massachusetts or reimbursing him for any expenses incurred on her behalf.

The Injustice [he said in his *Tract Relative to the Affair of Hutchinson's Letters*] of thus depriving the People there of the Use of their own Money, to pay an Agent acting in their Defence, while the Governor, with a large Salary out of the Money extorted from them by Act of Parliament, was enabled to pay plentifully Maudit and Wedderburn to abuse and defame them and their Agent, is so evident as to need no Comment. But this they call GOVERNMENT!

Indecent, however, as was the treatment accorded by the Privy Council to the man, who had striven so loyally, so zealously and so wisely to promote the greatness and glory of England, it hardly conveyed a ruder shock to his mind than that which it received later when he saw the plan for the settlement of the American Controversy drafted by Lord Chatham rejected by the House of Lords, with as much contempt he told Charles Thomson, "as they could have shown to a Ballad offered by a drunken Porter."

To hear so many of these *Hereditary* Legislators [he said in his *Account of Negotiations in London*], declaiming so vehemently against, not the Adopting merely, but even the *Consideration* of a Proposal so important in its Nature, offered by a Person of so weighty a Character, one of the first Statesmen of the Age, who had taken up this Country when in the lowest Despondency, and conducted it to Victory and Glory, thro' a War with two of the mightiest Kingdoms in Europe; to hear them censuring his Plan, not only for their own Misunderstandings of what was in it, but for their Imaginations of what was not in it, which they would not give themselves an Opportunity of rectifying by a second Reading; to perceive the total Ignorance of the Subject in some, the Prejudice and Passion of others, and the wilful Perversion of Plain Truth in several of the Ministers; and upon the whole to see it so ignominiously rejected by so great a Majority, and so hastily too, in Breach of all Decency, and prudent Regard to the Character and Dignity of their Body, as a third Part of the National Legislature, gave me an exceeding mean Opinion of their Abilities, and made their Claim of Sovereignty over three Millions of Virtuous, sensible People in America seem the greatest of Absurdities, since they appear'd to have scarce Discretion enough to govern a Herd of Swine. *Hereditary Legislators!* thought I. There would be more Propriety, because less Hazard of Mischief, in having (as in some University of Germany) *Hereditary Professors of Mathematicks.*

Yet this is the Government [Franklin declared in the letter

to Charles Thomson, in which he used the simile of the ballad and the drunken porter, and also referred to equally rash conduct upon the part of the House of Commons], by whose Supreme Authority, we are to have our Throats cut, if we do not acknowledge, and whose dictates we are implicitly to obey, while their conduct hardly entitles them to Common Respect.

But it was only after he had been shamelessly and publicly proscribed, under circumstances which gave him good reason to believe that he was but the vicarious victim of a People unfeelingly doomed to the cruel alternatives of fratricidal resistance or vassalage, that he gave way, though still engaged in a last effort to stave off the evil day of separation, to such reproachful or denunciatory utterances as these. Indeed, as it is a satisfaction to a stupid man to know that Homer sometimes nodded, and to a vicious man to know that the character of Washington is supposed to have been at last successfully fly-specked by some petty scandal-monger, so it ought to be a relief to a hasty man to know that Franklin was once on the point of succumbing entirely to a sudden flaw of anger. Goaded beyond endurance by the reflections, which he had just heard in the House of Lords on everything American, including American courage, honesty and intelligence, reflections as contemptuous, he said, as if his countrymen were the lowest of mankind, and almost of a different species from the English of Britain, he drew up a heated protest, as the agent of Massachusetts, demanding from Great Britain present satisfaction for the blockade of Boston, and stating that satisfaction for the proposed exclusion of Massachusetts from the Newfoundland and other fisheries, if carried into effect, would probably also some day be demanded. When he showed the paper to his friend, Thomas Walpole, a member of the House of Commons, Walpole, we are told by him, looked at it and him several times alternately, as if he apprehended

him to be out of his senses. However, Franklin asked him to lay it before Lord Camden, which he undertook to do. When it came back to Franklin, it was with a note from Walpole telling him simply that it was thought that it might be attended with dangerous consequences to his person, and contribute to exasperate the nation. The caution that Franklin exhibited before permitting the protest to pass from his possession suggests the idea that, in writing it, he was merely seeking a safe vent for the mental ferment of the moment. It was doubtless well for him that the paper got no further; for it is painful to relate that the disposition was not wanting in England to construe some of his letters to Thomas Cushing as treasonable. In a letter to Cushing, he said that he was not conscious of any treasonable intention, but that, after the manner in which he had recently been treated in the matter of the Hutchinson letters, he was not to wonder if less than a small lump in his forehead was voted a horn. Six months later, he wrote to Galloway that it was thought by many that, if the British soldiers and the New Englanders should come to blows, he would probably be taken up; for the ministerial people affected everywhere to represent him as the cause of all the misunderstanding. We know nothing better calculated to show how hopeless it is for the lamb downstream to convince the wolf upstream that the water flowing by him was not muddied from below than the fact that, during the debate over Lord Chatham's conciliatory Plan, Lord Sandwich referred to Franklin as one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies that England had ever known. That is to say, Franklin, the loyal Englishman who, in one of his early papers on electricity, could not even mention the King without adding, "God preserve him," who had shrunk in the beginning from the agitation against the Stamp Act as little less than treason, who had deprecated the Boston tea-party as lawless

violence, and had, from first to last, condemned mob-license in every form in America as steadfastly as tyranny in England.

The wonder is that he should not have reached the decision sooner than he did that there was nothing to be gained for his country by his longer sojourn in England. His intercourse, as an American agent with Lord Hillsborough, when Secretary of State for America and First Commissioner to the Board of Trade, was alone enough to bring him to such a decision.[1] As an Irishman, familiar with the repressive policy of England in Ireland, Hillsborough could not well approve of British restrictions upon American commerce and manufactures; but there his sympathy with America ceased. Franklin truly said that the agents of the Colonies in England were quite as useful to England as to the Colonies, since they had more than once by timely advice kept the English Government from making mistakes arising out of ignorance of special conditions peculiar to America. But this view was not shared by Hillsborough. He insisted that no agent from Massachusetts should be recognized in England, who was not appointed, from year to year, by the General Court of Massachusetts by an act, to which the Governor of that colony had given his assent. As the Governor was dependent for his appointment upon the British Ministry, and would hardly fail to name any one as agent, who might be selected by it, such a tenure was equivalent to vesting the selection of the agent in Hillsborough himself, whose wishes, when selected, the agent was not likely to oppose. Under such conditions, an agent would be of no value to the colony, Franklin declared, and, under such conditions, he further declared,

[1] Jared Sparks hardly overstates the case when he asserts that the policy and acts of Lord Hillsborough contributed more, perhaps, than those of any other man towards increasing the discontents which led to the separation of the Colonies from Great Britain.

he would not be willing himself to hold the post. "His Character is Conceit, Wrongheadedness, Obstinacy, and Passion." Such were the terms in which Franklin summed up the moral attributes of Hillsborough to Dr. Cooper, after he had vainly striven for several years to give the former some salutary conception of the importance of ascertaining the real sentiments and wants of America. The letter, in which these terms were employed, was accompanied by minutes of a spirited dialogue between Franklin and Hillsborough, which almost makes us regret that the former, among his other literary ventures, had not tested his qualifications as a playwright. The part of Hillsborough in the colloquy was to let Franklin fully know in language of mixed petulance and contempt that he declined to recognize him as an agent.

No such appointment shall be entered [he is minuted as declaring]. When I came into the administration of American affairs, I found them in great disorder. By *my firmness* they are now something mended; and, while I have the honour to hold the seals, I shall continue the same conduct, the same *firmness*. I think my duty to the master I serve, and to the government of this nation, requires it of me. If that conduct is not approved, *they* may take my office from me when they please. I shall make them a bow, and thank them; I shall resign with pleasure. That gentleman knows it, (*pointing to Mr. Pownall*), but, while I continue in it, I shall resolutely persevere in the same FIRMNESS. (*Spoken with great warmth, and turning pale in his discourse, as if he was angry at something or somebody besides the agent, and of more consequence to himself.*)

Then follows Franklin's reply:

B. F. (*Reaching out his hand for the paper, which his Lordship returned to him*). I beg your Lordship's pardon for taking up so much of your time. It is, I believe, of no great importance whether the appointment is acknowledged or not, for I

have not the least conception that an agent can *at present* be of any use to any of the colonies. I shall therefore give your Lordship no further trouble. (Withdrew.)

As the dialogue discloses, Hillsborough had quite enough enemies already to render it prudent for him to abstain from making another of a man who had declared in the letter, with which it was enclosed, that, if there was to be a war between them, he would do his best to defend himself, and annoy his adversary little, regarding the story of the Earthen Pot and Brazen Pitcher.

One encouragement I have [Franklin said in his letter], the knowledge, that he is not a whit better lik'd by his Colleagues in the Ministry, than he is by me, that he can not probably continue where he is much longer, and that he can scarce be succeeded by anybody, who will not like me the better for his having been at Variance with me.

Later, Franklin wrote to Thomas Cushing:

This Man's Mandates have been treated with Disrespect in America, his Letters have been criticis'd, his Measures censur'd and despis'd; which has produced in him a kind of settled Malice against the Colonies, particularly ours, that would break out into greater Violence if cooler Heads did not set some Bounds to it. I have indeed good Reason to believe that his Conduct is far from being approved by the King's other Servants, and that he himself is so generally dislik'd by them that it is not probable he will continue much longer in his present Station, the general Wish here being to recover (saving only the Dignity of Government) the Good-Will of the Colonies, which there is little reason to expect while they are under his wild Administration. Their permitting so long his Eccentricities (if I may use such an Expression) is owing, I imagine, rather to the Difficulty of knowing how to dispose of or what to do with a man of his wrong-headed bustling Industry, who, it is apprehended, may be more mischievous out of Administration than in it, than to any kind of personal Regard for him.

The Earthen Pot and the Brazen Pitcher *did* collide, and, contrary to every physical law, it was not the Earthen Pot that suffered. Certain Americans, including Franklin himself, and certain Englishmen had applied to the Crown for a tract of land between the Alleghanies and the Ohio River, and their petition was referred to the Board of Trade of which Hillsborough was President. It asked for the right to settle two million, five hundred thousand acres. Hillsborough, who was secretly hostile to the grant, for the purpose of over-loading the application, deceitfully suggested that the applicants should ask for enough land to constitute a province; whereupon Franklin took him at his word and changed the acreage petitioned for to twenty-three million acres. When the report of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, drafted by Hillsborough, was made, it opposed the grant.

If a vast territory [said His Majesty's Governor of Georgia, in a letter to the Commissioners, which is quoted in the Report], be granted to any set of gentlemen, who really mean to people it, and actually do so, it must draw and carry out a great number of people from Great Britain; and I apprehend they will soon become a kind of separate and independent people, and who will set up for themselves; that they will soon have manufactures of their own; that they will neither take supplies from the mother country, nor from the provinces, at the back of which they are settled; that, being at a distance from the seat of government, courts, magistrates, &c., &c., they will be out of the reach and control of law and government; that it will become a receptacle and kind of asylum for offenders, who will fly from justice to such new country or colony.

To this report, which sought to confine America to practically the same limits as those fixed by the French, Franklin, with his knowledge of American conditions,

and breadth of vision, made such a crushing reply that, when the report and the reply came before the Privy Council, the application for the grant, partly because of the strength of Franklin's reply, and, partly from dislike to Hillsborough, was approved. Mortified by this action, Hillsborough resigned his office, and was succeeded by Lord Dartmouth, the nobleman described by Cowper as "One who wears a coronet, and prays."

In keeping with the deceit, practiced by Hillsborough, in endeavoring to give an extravagant turn to the Ohio petition, was his previous bearing towards Franklin after the interview with the latter, at which he paid such a fulsome tribute to his own firmness. During the year preceding the action of the Privy Council, Franklin had heard that Hillsborough had expressed himself about him in very angry terms, calling him a Republican, a factious, mischievous fellow, and the like. Nevertheless, a few weeks later, when he was in Ireland, Hillsborough pressed him so warmly to call upon him at his country-seat, upon his way to the North of Ireland, that he did so, and was detained there no less than four days, in the enjoyment of a hospitality so assiduous that his host, Franklin tells us, even put his oldest son, Lord Kilwarling, into his phaeton with him, to drive him a round of forty miles, that he might see the country, the seats, manufactures, etc., and moreover covered him with his own great coat lest he should take cold. Later, after both Franklin and Hillsborough had returned to London, the former called upon the latter repeatedly for the purpose of thanking him for his civilities in Ireland. On each day, he was told that his Lordship was not at home, although on two of them he had good reason to know the contrary. On the last of the two, which was one of his Lordship's levee days, the porter, seeing Franklin, came out and surlily chid the latter's coachman for opening the door of his coach before he had inquired whether his

Lordship was at home. Then, turning to Franklin, he said, "My Lord is not at home." "I have never since been nigh him," Franklin wrote to his son, "and we have only abused one another at a distance."

During the year succeeding the action of the Privy Council, when Franklin was with his friend Lord Le Despencer at Oxford, Lord Hillsborough, upon being told by Lord Le Despencer, as they were descending the stairs in Queen's College, that Franklin was above, re-ascended them immediately, and, approaching Franklin in the pleasantest manner imaginable, said, "Dr. Franklin, I did not know till this Minute that you were here, and I am come back *to make you my Bow!* I am glad to see you at Oxford, and that you look so well," &c.

In Return for this Extravagance [Franklin said in a letter to his son], I complimented him on his Son's Performance in the Theatre, tho' indeed it was but indifferent, so that Account was settled. For as People say, when they are angry, *If he strikes me, I'll strike him again;* I think sometimes it may be right to say, *If he flatters me, I'll flatter him again.* This is *Lex Talionis*, returning Offences in kind. His Son however (Lord Fairford), is a valuable young Man, and his Daughters, Ladys Mary and Charlotte, most amiable young Women. My Quarrel is only with him, who, of all the Men I ever met with, is surely the most unequal in his Treatment of People, the most insincere, and the most wrong-headed.

Such was the man, to whom the oversight of American affairs was committed at a highly critical period in the relations of England and the Colonies. Speaking of Hillsborough's successor, Lord Dartmouth, Franklin said, "he is truly a good Man, and wishes sincerely a good Understanding with the Colonies, but does not seem to have Strength equal to his Wishes." This minister was wise enough to recognize the agents of the American

colonies, including Franklin, again, despite the stand taken by Hillsborough against them. But, when Lord Chatham's conciliatory plan was so summarily rejected by the House of Lords, Dartmouth, though he had, when the motion was first made, suggested that it should be deliberately considered, was later swept along unresistingly by the majority. In his account of the incident, Franklin said, "I am the more particular in this, as it is a Trait of that Nobleman's Character, who from his Office is suppos'd to have so great a Share in American affairs, but who has in reality no Will or Judgment of his own, being with Dispositions for the best Measures, easily prevail'd with to join in the worst."

But it is in the history of the Hutchinson letters that we find the most convincing proof of the hopelessness of Franklin's task in his endeavor to bring public opinion in England over to his generous views of her true interests. On one occasion, when speaking in terms of warm resentment of the conduct of the ministry in dispatching troops to Boston, he was to his great surprise, to use his own words, assured by a gentleman of character and distinction that the action of the ministry in this, and the other respects, obnoxious to America, had been brought about by some of the most reputable persons among the Americans themselves. He was skeptical, and the gentleman, whose name he never revealed, being desirous of establishing the truth of his statement to the satisfaction of both Franklin and Franklin's countrymen, called upon Franklin a few days afterwards, and exhibited to him letters from Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson and Secretary Andrew Oliver of Massachusetts, and other residents of that colony which only too conclusively confirmed what had been said. The gentleman would not permit copies to be taken of the letters, but he delivered the originals to Franklin with the express understanding that they were not to be printed, that no copies were to

be taken of them, that they were to be shown only to a few leading men in Massachusetts, and were to be carefully returned. Franklin transmitted them, subject to these conditions, to Thomas Cushing of the Committee of Correspondence at Boston. He did so, he tells us, because he thought that to shift the responsibility for the recent ministerial measures from England to America would tend to restore good feeling between the people of Massachusetts and England, and, moreover, because he felt that intelligence of such importance should not be withheld from the constituents whose agent he was. In his communication, accompanying the letters, Franklin stipulated that they were to be read only by the members of the Massachusetts Committee of Correspondence, Messrs. Bowdoin and Pitts of the Council, Drs. Chauncey, Cooper and Winthrop, and a few such other persons as Cushing might select; and were to be returned in a few months to him; but it is not true, as was afterwards alleged by his enemies, that his communication was attended by any effort to conceal his personal relations to the letters. A part of the communication is too good a specimen of the precision that Franklin always brought to the language of rebuke or condemnation not to be quoted at length

As to the writers [he said], I can easily as well as charitably conceive it possible, that a Man educated in Prepossessions of the unbounded Authority of Parliament, &c. may think unjustifiable every Opposition even to its unconstitutional Exactions, and imagine it their Duty to suppress, as much as in them lies, such Opposition. But when I find them bartering away the Liberties of their native Country for Posts, and negociating for Salaries and Pensions extorted from the People; and, conscious of the Odium these might be attended with, calling for Troops to protect and secure the Enjoyment of them: When I see them exciting Jealousies in the Crown, and provoking it to Wrath against so great a Part of its most faithful Subjects; creating Enmities between the different

Countries of which the Empire consists; occasioning a great Expence to the *Old* Country for Suppressing or Preventing imaginary Rebellions in the *New*, and to the new Country for the Payment of needless Gratifications to useless Officers and Enemies; I can not but doubt their Sincerity even in the political Principles they profess, and deem them mere Time-servers seeking their own private Emolument, thro' any Quantity of Publick Mischief; Betrayers of the Interest, not of their native Country only, but of the Government they pretend to serve, and of the whole English Empire.

Later, after strong representations had been made to Franklin by Cushing that the letters could be put to no effective use, unless they could be retained or copied, Franklin obtained leave from the gentleman, who had entrusted them to him, to authorize Cushing to show them to any persons that he chose. The fact that the letters were in Boston was soon noised abroad, whereupon the Assembly required them to be laid before it, though under its promise that they would not be printed. An occasion or pretext for disregarding this promise soon arose, when copies were produced in the House by a member who was said to have received them from England. Then the Assembly adopted a series of indignant resolutions, declaring, among other things, that the authors of the letters were justly chargeable with the great corruption of morals, and all the confusion, misery and bloodshed which had been the natural effects of the introduction of troops into the Province, and that it was its bounden duty to pray that his Majesty would be pleased to remove Hutchinson and Oliver forever from the Government thereof. These resolutions were duly followed by a petition for the removal which was transmitted to Franklin and by him transmitted to Lord Dartmouth, who laid it before the King.

When the news reached England that the letters had been published in Massachusetts, there was great curiosity

to know who had transmitted them. Thomas Whately, a London banker, and the brother of William Whately, then deceased, to whom they were written, was suspected; he suspected John Temple, a former Governor of New Hampshire, who had had access to the papers of the decedent, and, his suspicions having been brought to the attention of Temple, the latter called upon him, denied all knowledge of the letters, and demanded a public exoneration. The written statement from Whately which followed was not satisfactory to Temple, and he challenged the former to a duel in which Whately was severely wounded. Up to this time, it was not known except to a few persons that Franklin had forwarded the letters to America; nor even for a time after the duel did he feel that it was incumbent upon him to tell the world that he had done so. But, when he heard that the duel would probably be renewed, as soon as Whately recovered his strength, he felt discharged from the obligation of silence that he had previously recognized to the person from whom he had received the letters, and published a communication in the *Public Advertiser* stating that it was impossible for Whately to have sent the letters to Boston, or for Temple to have purloined them from Whately, because they had never been in Whately's possession, and that he, Franklin alone, was the person who "obtained and transmitted to Boston the letters in question."[1]

Franklin had put his head into the lion's jaws. While he was preparing for his return to America, for the purpose of attending to a matter arising out of the operations of the American Post-office Department, he received a notice from the Clerk of the Privy Council, informing him that the Lords of the Committee for Plantation Affairs would

[1] On Jan. 28, 1820, John Adams stated in a letter to Dr. Hosack, of New York, that Temple had told him in Holland that he had communicated the Hutchinson letters to Dr. Franklin, though "I swear to you," he said to Adams, "that I did not procure them in the manner represented."

meet at the Cockpit on Tuesday, January 11, 1774, at noon, for the purpose of considering the petition for the removal of Hutchinson and Oliver, which had been referred to the Council by the King, and requiring him to be present. A similar notice was sent to Bollan, the London Agent of the Massachusetts Council. When the petition came on for hearing, at the request of Franklin, its consideration was postponed for some three weeks, so that he could retain counsel to face Alexander Wedderburn, the Solicitor-general, who had been retained by Israel Mauduit, the agent of the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts.

The counsel retained by Franklin were John Dunning, a former Solicitor-general, and subsequently Lord Ashburton, and John Lee, who later became the Solicitor-general under the administration of Charles James Fox. When the hearing did take place, it proved for every reason a memorable one. Edmund Burke could not recollect that so many Privy Councillors had ever attended a meeting of the Council before. There were no less than thirty-five in attendance. The Lord President Gower presided. In the audience, among other persons, were the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord North, the Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne, Edmund Burke, Joseph Priestley, Jeremy Bentham, Arthur Lee, of Virginia, then a law student in London, who had been selected by the Legislature of Massachusetts to act as its agent, in the event of the absence or death of Franklin, Ralph Izard, of South Carolina, who had borne Temple's challenge to Thomas Whately, and Dr. Edward Bancroft, who was afterwards at Paris with Franklin. The hearing was opened by the reading of the letter written by Franklin to Lord Dartmouth, when transmitting the petition to him, the petition itself, the resolutions of the Massachusetts Assembly and the letters upon which they were based. In Franklin's opinion, Dunning and Lee in their

pleas "acquitted themselves very handsomely." Dunning's points, Burke thought, were "well and ably put." The appeal of the Massachusetts Assembly, Dunning argued was to the wisdom and goodness of his Majesty; they were asking a favor, not demanding justice. As they had no impeachment to make, so they had no evidence to offer. Of similar tenor was the address of John Lee. The reply of Wedderburn was pointed and brilliant, and as rabid as if he had been summing up against an ordinary criminal at an ordinary assize.

The letters, could not have come to Dr. Franklin [he argued], by fair means. The writers did not give them to him; nor yet did the deceased correspondent, who, from our intimacy, would otherwise have told me of it. Nothing, then, will acquit Dr. Franklin of the charge of obtaining them by fraudulent or corrupt means, for the most malignant of purposes, unless he stole them from the person who stole them. This argument is irrefragable. I hope, my lords, you will mark and brand the man, for the honor of this country, of Europe, and of mankind. Private correspondence has hitherto been held sacred in times of the greatest party rage, not only in politics but religion. . . . He has forfeited all the respect of societies and of men [the orator went on]. Into what companies will he hereafter go with an unembarrassed face, or the honest intrepidity of virtue? Men will watch him with a jealous eye; they will hide their papers from him, and lock up their escritoirs. He will henceforth esteem it a libel to be called *a man of letters; homo TRIUM literarum!* [*Trium litterarum homo*, a man of three letters, was a fur, or thief]. But [continued Wedderburn], he not only took away the letters from one brother; but kept himself concealed till he nearly occasioned the murder of the other. It is impossible to read his account, expressive of the coolest and most deliberate malice, without horror. Amidst these tragical events, of one person nearly murdered, of another answerable for the issue, of a worthy governor hurt in his dearest interests, the fate of America in suspense; here is a man, who, with the

utmost insensibility of remorse, stands up and avows himself the author of all. I can compare it only to Zanga, in Dr. Young's *Revenge:*

> "Know then 'twas—I;
> I forged the letter, I disposed the picture;
> I hated, I despised, and I destroy."

I ask, my Lords, whether the revengeful temper attributed by poetic fiction only, to the bloody African, is not surpassed by the coolness and apathy of the wily American?

More than one bystander has recorded the impressions left upon his mind by this savage philippic.

I was not more astonished [Jeremy Bentham tells us] at the brilliancy of his lightning, than astounded at the thunder that accompanied it. As he stood, the cushion lay on the council table before him; his station was between the seats of two of the members, on the side of the right hand of the Lord President. I would not for double the greatest fee the orator could on that occasion have received, been in the place of that cushion; the ear was stunned at every blow.

"At the sallies of his sarcastic wit," Priestley declares, "all the members of the Council, the President himself not excepted, frequently laughed outright. No person belonging to the Council behaved with decent gravity, except Lord North, who, coming late, took his stand behind the chair opposite to me." Burke spoke of the attack on "Poor Dr. Franklin" as "beyond all bounds and decency," and the language, used by Lord Shelburne, in describing it to Lord Chatham, was hardly, if any, less emphatic. "The behavior of the Judges," he said, "exceeded, as was agreed on all hands, that of any committee of elections." Dunning's rejoinder to Wedderburn was wholly ineffective. His voice, always thick, was, from illness, feebler and huskier than usual even in his first address, and, exhausted as he was by standing for three

hours in a room, in which no one was allowed to sit but the Privy Councillors themselves, who were supposed on such occasions to be the immediate representatives of the King, his second address was hardly audible. Lee was equally ineffective. Wedderburn's speech, therefore, which from a purely forensic point of view was really a masterpiece, was left to assert its full effect, to become the sensation of every Club in London, and to win the plaudit of every bigoted or unreflecting Englishman. "All men," Fox said, "tossed up their hats and clapped their hands in boundless delight at it."

What of Franklin during the malignant assault? The apartment, in which the hearing took place, was a small one. At one end, was an open fireplace, with a recess on each side of it. The Council table stretched from a point near this fireplace to the other end of the room. The Lord President sat at its head, and the other councillors were ranged in seats down its sides. Such spectators as had been able to secure the highly-prized privilege of being present remained standing throughout the session. In the chimney recess to the left of the President, stood Franklin with Burke and Priestley nearby. The dialectical ability and skill, which made his examination before the House of Commons so famous, he now had no opportunity to display; and unfailing fortitude was all that he could oppose to the outrage for which he had been singled out. With that, however, his uncommon strength of character abundantly supplied him.

The Doctor was dressed in a full dress suit of spotted Manchester velvet [Dr. Edward Bancroft wrote years afterwards to William Temple Franklin], and stood *conspicuously erect*, without the smallest movement of any part of his body. The muscles of his face had been previously composed, so as to afford a placid, tranquil expression of countenance, and he did not suffer the slightest alteration of it to appear during the continuance of the speech, in which he was so harshly

and improperly treated. In short, to quote the words which he employed concerning himself on another occasion, he kept "his countenance as immovable as if his features had been made of wood."

Alone, in the recess on the left hand of the president, stood Benjamin Franklin [is the account of Bentham], in such position as not to be visible from the situation of the president, remaining the whole time like a rock, in the same posture, his head resting on his left hand; and in that attitude abiding the pelting of the pitiless storm.

Nothing but Jedburgh justice, of course, was to be expected from such a Committee in such a case, represented by such an advocate. Its report, dated the same day as its sitting, and as likely as not drafted beforehand, found that the letters had been surreptitiously obtained, and contained "nothing reprehensible"; that the petition was based on resolutions, formed on false and erroneous allegations; and was groundless, vexatious and scandalous; and calculated only for the seditious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamor and discontent in the province; and that nothing had been laid before the Committee which did, or could, in their opinion, in any manner, or in any degree, impeach the honor, integrity, or conduct of the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor. Wherefore, the Lords of the Committee were humbly of the opinion that the petition ought to be dismissed. This recommendation was approved by the King, and an order was issued by him that the petition be dismissed, as answering the character imputed to it by the Committee. Nor did vengeance stop here. On the second day, after the Committee rose, Franklin was handed a communication from the Postmaster-General, informing him in brief terms that the King had "found it necessary" to dismiss him from the office of Deputy Postmaster-General in America.

In reporting the manner in which he had been affronted by the Privy Council to his Massachusetts constituents,

Franklin used language in keeping with the sober spirit in which he had striven from the beginning to bring about an understanding between England and her Colonies.

What I feel on my own account [he said], is half lost in what I feel for the public. When I see, that all petitions and complaints of grievances are so odious to government, that even the mere pipe which conveys them becomes obnoxious, I am at a loss to know how peace and union are to be maintained or restored between the different parts of the empire. Grievances cannot be redressed unless they are known; and they cannot be known but through complaints and petitions. If these are deemed affronts, and the messengers punished as offenders, who will henceforth send petitions? And who will deliver them? It has been thought a dangerous thing in any state to stop up the vent of griefs. Wise governments have therefore generally received petitions with some indulgence, even when but slightly founded. Those, who think themselves injured by their rulers, are sometimes, by a mild and prudent answer, convinced of their error. But where complaining is a crime, hope becomes despair.

His fellow-Americans were not so self-restrained. The American Post Office was shunned by its former patrons, and letters were delivered largely by private agencies, effigies of Wedderburn and Hutchinson were carried about the streets of Philadelphia, and, at night, were burnt, we are told, by Joseph Reed, "with the usual ceremonies, amidst the acclamations of the multitude." "Nothing can exceed," the same narrator adds, "the veneration in which Dr. Franklin is now held, but the detestation we have of his enemies." Wedderburn, who had complained in his speech of the attention paid by the press to the movements of Franklin, as though he were a great diplomatic character, had more occasion than ever to sneer at his public prominence. Hutchinson was compelled to resign his office, and to retire from execration in America to a slender pension and obscurity in England. Even

in England, Horace Walpole stayed the pen, to which we are indebted for so many charming letters, long enough to write:

> "Sarcastic Sawney, swol'n with spite and prate,
> On silent Franklin poured his venal hate,
> The calm philosopher, without reply,
> Withdrew, and gave his country liberty."[1]

Lord John Russell has said that it is "impossible to justify the conduct of Franklin" in the matter of the

[1] Worldly success has rarely been less effective in gilding an unworthy character than it was in the case of Wedderburn. American indignation over his tirade against Franklin, indecent as it was under the circumstances, would seem to be somewhat overdone, when we remember the professional license allowed from time immemorial to the pleas of lawyers. It is enough to say that we can safely leave his English contemporaries to take care of his forbidding reputation. The searing irons of two of the most ferocious satirists of literary history have left ineffaceable scars upon his forehead. In the *Rosciad* Churchill lifted the veil from the future in these terms:

> "To mischief train'd, e'en from his mother's womb,
> Grown old in fraud, tho. yet in manhood's bloom,
> Adopting arts, by which gay villains rise,
> And reach the heights, which honest men despise."

"In vain," Junius wrote to the Duke of Grafton, some ten years later, "would our gracious sovereign have looked round him for another character as consummate as yours. Lord Mansfield shrinks from his principles; Charles Fox is yet in blossom; and as for Mr. Wedderburn, there is something about him which even treachery can not trust." But the "gracious sovereign," to whom Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Rosslyn, sold his Whig principles, when they had reached just the right stage of merchantable maturity, was equally hard upon him. "When he died," Lord Brougham tells us, "after a few hours' illness, the intelligence was brought to the King, who, with a circumspection abundantly characteristic, asked the bearer of it if he was quite *sure* of the fact, as Lord Rosslyn had not been ailing before; and, upon being assured that a sudden attack of gout in the stomach had really ended the days of his late servant and once assiduous courtier, his majesty was graciously pleased to exclaim: "Then he has not left a worse man behind him."

Hutchinson letters, and from time to time the same idea has been more or less hesitatingly advanced by others. Its justice, we confess, has never been apparent to us. That the letters did pass into the possession of Franklin, under the circumstances stated by him, which certainly do not reflect in any manner upon his honor, can hardly be doubted, unless mere suspicion is to give the lie to a life of uniform integrity. The mode, in which they were transmitted to America, under the restrictions imposed by him, was attended with so little regard to secrecy, so far as his connection with them was concerned, that Dr. Cooper wrote to him, "I can not, however, but admire your honest openness in this affair, and noble negligence of any inconveniences that might arise to yourself in this essential service to our injured country." It was not until the letters had been printed in America, contrary to his engagement with the gentleman, who had handed them to him, that he expressed the wish to Dr. Cooper that the fact of his having sent them should be kept secret, and not then until his inclinations on the subject were pointedly sounded by Dr. Cooper. As soon as they threatened to cause bloodshed, which he had a chance to avert, he made his connection with them public, and assumed the full responsibility for his act. Moreover, he truly said of the letters, when he assumed this responsibility in his communication to the *Public Advertiser*, "They were not of the nature of *private* letters between friends. They were written by public officers to persons in public stations, on public affairs, and intended to procure public measures; they were therefore handed to other public persons, who might be influenced by them to produce those measures." Little can be added to this convincing statement. If a political agent of England in Boston had, under the same circumstances, come into possession of letters from English officials in England to Cushing or Dr. Cooper, revealing a deliberate intent on

the part of the writers to initiate measures aimed at the just prerogatives of the Crown or Parliament, who would have thought the worse of him if he had transmitted them to King or Parliament? Were letters designed to help along the introduction of a military force into Boston for the purpose of abridging the political liberties of its people entitled to any higher degree of privacy? The accusation that Franklin had violated the confidence of private correspondence came with but poor grace, to say the least, from a Government which made a practice of breaking the seals of letters, and of no letters oftener than of those of Franklin, entrusted to its care. Indeed, not only were the seals of Franklin's letters frequently broken, and the letters read, but, in some instances, the letters were permanently retained by the English Government.

It was the fashion in England for a long time to ascribe the intense resentment felt by Franklin against England, after war broke out between that country and the colonies, to the indignity to which he was subjected by the Privy Council, and his dismission from office. The statement is not supported by the facts. That these circumstances made a deep impression upon his mind is undeniable, but it was really not until he found himself in America in 1775 that he gave himself up to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by his remaining longer in England. After his removal from office, he still counselled his correspondents in America to adhere to a policy of patience and self-restraint, and in a letter to Thomas Cushing and others, written only a few days after the hearing at the Cockpit, he termed the destruction of the tea at Boston an unwarrantable destruction of private property and "an Act of violent Injustice." To all the efforts of Lord Chatham and his high-minded associates, after this hearing, to bring about a reconciliation between England and America, he lent the full weight of his advice

and experience. And, when some of the members of the British Ministry, after it, ashamed to deal with him directly, covertly opened up an interchange of proposals with him through David Barclay, Dr. Fothergill and Lord Howe, in regard to the terms upon which a reconciliation might still be reached, he entered into the negotiations with a spirit singularly free from personal bitterness. There are few things more pathetic in the history of sundered ties than the account that Priestley has given us of the last days that Franklin spent in England in 1775. "A great part of the day above-mentioned that we spent together," Priestley tells us, "he was looking over a number of American newspapers, directing me what to extract from them for the English ones; and in reading them, he was frequently not able to proceed for the tears literally running down his cheeks." These, however, were not womanish tears, but rather such iron tears as ran down Pluto's cheeks. Never was there a time after the heart of America was laid bare to Franklin by the remonstrance against the Stamp Act when he was not unflinchingly prepared, if the painful necessity was forced upon him, to unite with his countrymen in defying the armed power of England. As the fateful issue of the protracted controversy approached nearer and nearer, his language became bolder and bolder.

The eyes of all Christendom [he wrote to James Bowdoin a few days before he left England in 1775], are now upon us, and our honour as a people is become a matter of the utmost consequence to be taken care of. If we tamely give up our rights in this contest, a century to come will not restore us in the opinion of the world; we shall be stamped with the character of dastards, poltrons and fools; and be despised and trampled upon, not by this haughty, insolent nation only, but by all mankind. Present inconveniences are, therefore, to be borne with fortitude, and better times expected.

"Informes hyemes reducit
Jupiter; idem
Summovet. Non si male nunc, et olim
Sic erit."[1]

When he reached the shores of his native land, it was to hear that, while he was at sea, the battles of Lexington and Concord had been fought, and that the veins of the two countries, which he had striven so hard to keep closed, were already open and running.[2]

From that day, Franklin took his place with Washington, the Adamses, Jefferson and Patrick Henry as an inflexible champion of armed resistance to England. If he humored the more timid patriots, who were disposed to make still further appeals to English generosity, it was not because he shared their fallacious hopes but because he did not wish one column of the revolutionary movement to get too far in advance of the other. At this period of his life, his reputation was already very great. The English Tories believed or affected to believe that he was the father of all the mischief responsible for the American crisis. The English Whigs leaned upon his advice and assistance as those of a man who had the welfare of the entire British Empire deeply at heart. How he was regarded at home, is well illustrated in what General

[1] It is hard to think of a man, whose life was so essentially urban as that of Franklin, becoming a backwoodsman, but such he was ready to become, if necessary. In his *Hints for a Reply to the Protests of Certain Members of the House of Lords against the Repeal of the Stamp Act*, he uses this resolute language: "I can only Judge of others by myself. I have some little property in America. I will freely spend nineteen shillings in the pound to defend my right of giving or refusing the other shilling, and, after all, if I can not defend that right, I can retire cheerfully with my little family into the boundless woods of America, which are sure to afford freedom and subsistence to any man who can bait a hook or pull a trigger."

[2] In 1780, Franklin wrote from Passy to Georgiana Shipley: "I am unhappily an Enemy, yet I think there has been enough of Blood spilt, and I wish what is left in the Veins of that once lov'd People, may be spared by a Peace solid and everlasting."

Nathanael Greene and Abigail Adams had to say of him when he subsequently visited Washington's headquarters during the siege of Boston as a member of the Committee appointed by Congress to confer with Washington and delegates from the New England Colonies as to the best plan for raising, maintaining and disciplining the continental army. Recalling an occasion at this time, when Franklin had been brought under his observation, Greene wrote, "During the whole evening, I viewed that very great man with silent admiration." The language of Abigail Adams was not less intense.

> I had the pleasure of dining with Dr. Franklin [she said], and of admiring him, whose character from my infancy I had been taught to venerate. I found him social but not talkative; and, when he spoke, something useful dropped from his tongue. He was grave, yet pleasant and affable. You know I make some pretensions to physiognomy, and I thought I could read in his countenance the virtues of his heart, among which, patriotism shone in its full lustre: and with that is blended every virtue of a Christian.

Those were dramatic hours when highly wrought feelings readily ran into hyperbole; nor had any Madame Helvétius come along yet with her "Hélas! Franklin," and disordered skirts.

The reputation, which called forth these tributes, brought Franklin at once to the very forefront of the American Revolution, when he arrived at Philadelphia. The morning after his arrival, he, Thomas Willing and James Wilson, were elected by the Assembly of Pennsylvania as additional deputies to the Continental Congress that was to meet in Philadelphia in a few days, and he was re-elected to Congress at every succeeding election until his departure for France. By the first Congress, he was appointed Chairman of a Committee to devise a postal system for America; and when this Committee

recommended the appointment of a Postmaster-General and various postal subordinates, and the establishment of a line of posts from Falmouth (now Portland) in Maine to Savannah, with as many cross posts as the Postmaster-General might think fit, Franklin was elected by Congress the Postmaster-General for the first year. He was also appointed by Congress one of the members of a committee to draw up a declaration, to be published by Washington when he took command of the American army, but the paper drafted by him does not appear to have ever been presented by him to Congress. At any rate, it adds nothing to his literary reputation, and is disfigured by one of the unseasonable *facetiæ* into which he had a way of wandering at times on grave occasions, after he found his feet again in the easy slippers of his old American environment.

Franklin also made some wise suggestions to Congress with respect to the best method of preventing the depreciation of the paper money issued by it. His first suggestion was that the bills should bear interest. This suggestion was rejected. His next was that, instead of the issuance of any more paper money, what had already been issued should be borrowed back upon interest. His last was that the interest should be paid in hard money, but both of the latter suggestions, though approved by Congress, were approved too late to accomplish their objects. After due tenderness had been exhibited by him to John Dickinson and the other members of Congress, who still clung to the hope of a reconciliation with England, Franklin brought forward a plan for the permanent union and efficient government of the Colonies. Under this plan each colony was to retain its internal independence, but its external relations, especially as respected resistance to the measures of the English Ministry, were committed to an annually-elected Congress. The supreme executive authority of the union was to be vested in a council of

twelve, to be elected by the Congress. Ireland, Canada, the West Indies, Bermuda, Nova Scotia and Florida as well as the thirteen colonies within the present limits of the United States, were to be invited to join the confederacy. The union was to last until British oppression ceased, and reparation was made to the Colonies for the injuries inflicted upon them; which, of course, under the circumstances, meant until the Greek Calends. The plan was referred to a committee, but it was never acted upon by the House; being too bold a project to suit the cautious scruples of John Dickinson and the other moderate members of the Continental Congress, who dreaded the effect of a project of union upon the mind of the King, while the petition of Congress to him was pending. Among other important committees upon which Franklin served, when a member of the first Continental Congress, was one to investigate the sources of saltpetre; another to treat with the Indians; another to look after the engraving and printing of the continental paper money; another to consider Lord North's conciliatory resolution; another on salt and lead; and still another to report a plan for regulating and protecting the commerce of the Colonies. At the next session of the Congress, he was equally active. Among the things in which we find him engaged at this session, are the arrangement of a system of posts and expresses for the rapid transmission of dispatches; the establishment of a line of packets between America and Europe; an effort to promote the circulation of the continental money; and the preparation of instructions for the American generals. It was at this session of Congress, too, that Thomas Lynch, of South Carolina, Benjamin Harrison, of Virginia, and himself were appointed the committee to visit Washington's camp before Boston. The journey to Boston consumed thirteen days, and the conference, which followed with the American Commander-in-Chief and the delegates

from the New England Colonies, resulted in many judicious conclusions with regard to the organization of the American army, and the conduct of the war, and, moreover, was an additional assurance to Washington and New England that, in the military operations before Boston, they could count upon the support of all America. It is obvious enough from writings, found among the papers of Franklin in his handwriting, that months before the Declaration of Independence was signed he was fully ready to renounce all allegiance to Great Britain. When the more conservative members of Congress so far yielded to their fears as to adopt, with the aid of some of the members from New England, a declaration that independence was not their aim, Franklin approved a plan then formed by Samuel Adams of bringing at least all the New England provinces together in a confederacy. "If you succeed," he said to Adams, "I will cast in my lot among you." This was six months before the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin also served with John Jay and Thomas Jefferson upon a committee to interview a mysterious foreigner who had repeatedly expressed a desire to make a confidential communication to Congress. The stranger, who possessed a military bearing and spoke with a French accent, assured the committee that his most Christian Majesty, the King of France, had heard with pleasure of the exertions made by the American Colonies in defence of their rights and privileges, wished them success, and would, when necessary, manifest in a more open manner his friendly sentiments towards them. But, as often as he was asked by the committee for his authority for conveying such flattering assurances, he contented himself with drawing his hand across his throat, and saying, "Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head."

When the report of this committee was made to Congress, a motion on the strength of it to send envoys to

France was defeated, but later a committee composed of Benjamin Harrison, John Dickinson, Thomas Johnson, John Jay and Franklin was appointed "to correspond secretly with friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world." The duties of this committee were mainly discharged by Franklin, who had, as we have seen, contracted many durable friendships abroad with men whose aid might mean much to America. To Charles W. F. Dumas, a native of Switzerland, residing at The Hague, he wrote, asking him to sound secretly the ambassadors of the different Powers, other than Great Britain, there for the purpose of ascertaining whether any of their courts were inclined to aid the Colonies or to form alliances with them, to let the mercantile world know that America was prepared to pay very high prices for arms, gunpowder and saltpetre, to send to America two engineer officers qualified to direct siege operations, construct forts and field-works and command artillery, and to receive and forward all letters that passed between the committee and its friends and agents abroad. A draft for one hundred pounds sterling accompanied the letter, together with an assurance from the committee that Dumas' services would be "considered and honorably rewarded by Congress." A similar letter was sent to Arthur Lee in London, accompanied by a remittance of two hundred pounds as his compensation. By the same ship went a letter from Franklin to Don Gabriel de Bourbon of Spain, in which, after thanking the Prince for the copy which he had sent him of the handsome Sallust, printed several years before at the royal press at Madrid, Franklin cleverly leads the attention of the Prince on to the consideration of a rising state which seemed likely soon to act a part of some importance on the stage of human affairs, and to furnish materials for a future Sallust. This letter, in which literary sympathy, the high-bred courtesy of a Spanish hidalgo and

political address are mingled with the happiest effect, is a good example of what it meant to America to have such a man as Franklin as her world-interpreter. These letters were all entrusted to the care of a special messenger, Thomas Story. Soon after he left America, M. Penet, a merchant of Nantes, sailed for France with a contract from the committee for furnishing arms, ammunition and clothing to the American army and various letters from Franklin to friends of his in France, including his devoted pupil, Dr. Dubourg. Subsequently, before a reply had been received to any of the letters written by Franklin on its behalf, the committee decided to send an agent to Paris duly empowered to treat with the French King. Silas Deane, a Yale graduate, and a man, who might have left an unblemished reputation as an American patriot behind him, if Arthur Lee had not hounded him out of France and America into England, was selected for this mission. He was selected, Adams is so unkind as to intimate, because he was a Congressman who had lost his seat in Congress. For him Franklin drew up a letter of instruction, fixing the character that he was to assume, that of a merchant, when he reached France, mentioning the persons friendly to America with whom he was to establish a familiar intercourse, and prescribing the manner in which he was to approach M. de Vergennes, the French Minister, for the purpose of soliciting the friendship and assistance of France.

Another important call was made upon the services of Franklin, when with Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, as his colleagues, he was appointed by Congress to visit Canada, and to endeavor to rescue our affairs in that country from the lamentable condition of confusion and distress into which they had fallen. Quebec had been assaulted by Montgomery and Arnold, and had repelled the assault, Montgomery being killed and Arnold wounded in the attempt, and the American army was

wasting away in the face of the intense cold, hunger and the small-pox. For the Continental paper money the Canadians had come to entertain a supreme contempt, and their attitude towards the Americans, with whom they had so often been at war in their earlier history, was in every respect that of distrust and aversion. With the committee went John Carroll, the cousin of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who had been educated for the priesthood in France, and spoke its language with perfect fluency. It was thought at the time that for the Commission to take with it to Catholic and French Canada such a companion was a masterly stroke of policy. The powers, with which the Commission were clothed, were of a plenary description; to admit Canada into the union of the Colonies, when brought over to the American cause by the appeals of the Commissioners, and to admit it with a republican form of government, to settle disputes between the civil and military authorities in Canada, and to exercise an extraordinary degree of authority in one form or another with respect to the military forces of America there. They were even to take steps to establish a newspaper in Canada to help along the American propaganda.

Of all the episodes in the life of Franklin, this is the one upon which the reader dwells with the least satisfaction. He was entirely too old for the fatigues and hardships of the long April journey of five hundred miles from Philadelphia to New York, and up the Hudson, and over Lakes George and Champlain, and across the country at the head of Lake Champlain to Montreal. The distance between Philadelphia and New York was covered by the party in two days, the journey up the Hudson to Albany was made in a sloop, engaged for them by Lord Stirling, and from Albany to the country seat of General Philip Schuyler at Saratoga, thirty-two miles from Albany, they were conveyed over deep roads in a large country-

wagon furnished by the General. Here it was that Franklin, debilitated by the exposure and shocks, to which his frame had been subjected, began to apprehend that he had undertaken a fatigue which, at his time of life, might prove too much for him, and sat down to write to some of his friends by way of farewell. After a few days' rest at Saratoga, the party, preceded by General Schuyler, went forward to Lake George. Though it was the middle of April, the lakes of that country were still covered with ice, and the roads with six inches of snow. After two days and a half of further travel, the southern end of the lake was reached. So encumbered with ice was it that the batteau, equipped with an awning for a cabin, with which General Schuyler had provided the party, took about thirty-six hours to traverse the thirty-six miles between the southern extremity of the lake and its northern. Then came the portage over the neck of land between Lake George and Lake Champlain, and the re-embarkation, after a delay of five days, on the waters of the latter lake. The portage was effected by placing the batteau on wheels and yoking it up to a string of oxen. Three days and a half more brought the party to St. John's, near the head of Lake Champlain, after a strenuous struggle with baffling ice and head winds. Another day's journey in *calèches* brought them to Montreal where they were received by Arnold and a concourse of officers and citizens, and saluted with military honors.

It is enough to say that the Commissioners found American credit in Canada sunk to the lowest point. Even the express, sent by them from St. John's to tell Arnold of their arrival at that point, was held at a ferry for the ferriage charge until a friend, who was passing, changed an American paper dollar for him into silver; nor would the *calèches* have come for the Commissioners if this friend had not engaged to pay the hire. Military defeat, violated contracts, discredited paper money and

the anticipated coming of a British force overhung like a bank of nimbus cloud the entire horizon of American hopes in Canada. The Commissioners could not borrow money either upon the public or upon their own private credit. In a letter to Congress after they had been in Canada a week, they declared that, if money could not be had to support the American army in Canada with honor, so as to be respected instead of being hated by the people, it was their firm and unanimous opinion that it would be better immediately to withdraw it. With his usual public spirit, Franklin advanced on the credit of Congress to Arnold and other servants of Congress three hundred and fifty-three pounds in gold out of his own pocket—a loan which proved of great service in procuring provisions for the American army at a time of dire necessity. Two days after the letter of the Commissioners to Congress was written, news came to Montreal that a British fleet, full of troops, had reached Quebec, and landed a force, which had routed the small American army there. The decision was at once reached that there was nothing for the American forces to do but to retire to St. John's, and to prepare to resist at that point the advance of the British. This decision was acted upon at once, and the next morning Franklin, attended by John Carroll, set out on his return to Philadelphia; leaving his fellow-commissioners to oversee the retreat to St. John's and the establishment of defensive works at that point. With the assistance of General Schuyler, he and his companion passed safely down the lakes to Albany, and from Albany, after they had again enjoyed the General's hospitality, they were conveyed by his chariot to New York. Here Franklin wrote to his fellow-commissioners that he grew daily more feeble, and thought that he could hardly have got along so far but for Mr. Carroll's friendly assistance and tender care of him. Some symptoms of the gout, he further said, had appeared,

which made him believe that his indisposition had been a smothered fit of that disorder, which his constitution wanted strength to form completely. But, with the reappearance of his old malady, came back the wit which, indeed, seems to have languished but little at any time under the rigors of his arduous mission. After congratulating Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll upon the recent capture of a British prize, loaded with seventy-five tons of gunpowder and a thousand carbines with bayonets, he further wrote: "The German Auxiliaries are certainly coming. It is our Business to prevent their Returning."

In the early part of June, Franklin was again in Philadelphia after an absence of about ten weeks. A little later the Declaration of Independence was reported to Congress by the committee, consisting of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Robert R. Livingston, Roger Sherman and himself, which had been elected by Congress to draft it, and after a debate, during which John Adams won only less reputation in defending, than Jefferson in writing, it, was adopted and given to the world, whose political opinions it was to influence so profoundly. Owing to a serious attack of the gout, Franklin had no hand in its preparation beyond suggesting a few verbal alterations. His part, however, in the adoption of the Articles of Confederation was more active. To the plan of allowing the thirteen States to vote on all questions by States, and of giving to each State, without reference to population or wealth, a single vote, he was strongly opposed; so much so that he even thought at one time of counselling Pennsylvania not to enter into the union if the plan was adopted. He hotly declared that a confederation upon such iniquitous terms would not last long. But we know from what Jefferson tells us that he also had his humorous fling at it. "At the time of the union of England and Scotland," he said, "the Duke of Argyle was most violently opposed to that measure, and among other things

predicted that, as the whale had swallowed Jonah, so Scotland would be swallowed by England." "However," added Franklin, "when Lord Bute came into the government, he soon brought into its administration so many of his countrymen that it was found, in event, that Jonah had swallowed the whale."

About the same time, Franklin, Jefferson and John Adams were appointed a committee by Congress to hit upon a device for the seal of the Confederacy. No more congenial task could possibly have been set for Franklin, whose ingenuity always revelled in conceits of this kind. A device, based upon the drowning of Pharaoh, and accompanied by the motto, "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God," was suggested by him, and was made by the Committee, together with the Eye of Providence in a radiant triangle, the motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, and other elaborate features a part of its recommendation. As soon as Franklin was safely out of the country in France, Congress, perhaps not forgetting his story of John Thompson, the hatter, rejected as too redundant the entire complicated design except the *E Pluribus Unum* and the Eye of Providence.

In the summer of 1776, Franklin also endeavored to carry out in another form his idea of preventing the Hessians from returning to their own country by assisting in distributing among them tobacco wrapped in copies of an address offering in the name of Congress a tract of land to every soldier who should desert the British service. Congress could not see why, if these hirelings were to be sold, they should not do the selling themselves instead of their Princes.

It was in the summer of 1776, too, that Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge, of South Carolina, were elected a committee by Congress to call upon Lord Howe at Staten Island for the purpose of ascertaining whether he had any authority to negotiate a treaty of peace, and,

if so, of learning what that authority was, and of receiving such propositions as he should think fit to make. Lord Howe was at the time the Admiral of the King's naval forces in America and joint commissioner with his brother General William Howe to grant pardons to such of the American rebels as should be ready to renew their allegiance to the King. On his arrival in July, 1776, at Sandy Hook, he had taken steps to distribute throughout the Colonies a declaration explaining the nature of the commission committed to his brother and himself. At the same time, he had written a letter to Franklin indicating his earnest desire to be instrumental in restoring peace between England and America. The same carrier delivered a copy of the declaration to Congress and the letter to Franklin. Both the declaration and the letter were given rude rebuffs. Congress ordered the declaration to be inserted in the newspapers so that, as it said, the few, who still remained suspended by a hope, founded either in the justice or moderation of their late King, might now at length be convinced that the valor alone of their country was to save its liberties. Franklin, after obtaining the permission of Congress, sent a reply to Lord Howe's letter by the hand of Colonel Palfrey of the American army. It is one of the best letters that he ever wrote, and told Lord Howe such blunt truths, and gave him such candid advice that, after reading it with surprise repeatedly flitting over his face, Lord Howe remarked to Colonel Palfrey with a gentleness as honorable to his amiable character as to that of Franklin that his old friend had expressed himself very warmly. Then subsequently had followed the disaster on Long Island, and the arrival of General Sullivan on parole at Philadelphia with a verbal message from Lord Howe to Congress, stating that he would like to confer with some of its members as private individuals though he could not yet treat with Congress itself. The result was the appointment of the committee to call upon him at Staten Island.

The conference between the committee and Lord Howe took place at a house on that island and came to nothing. The committee had no authority to do anything except to receive proposals from Lord Howe, who really had no seasonable proposition to make, and Lord Howe had no authority to do anything except to grant pardons to persons who were not conscious of having committed any offence. When he stated in polite terms that he could not confer with the members of the committee as a committee of Congress but only as gentlemen of great ability and influence in the colonies, Adams declared in his emphatic way that he was willing to consider himself for a few moments in any character which would be agreeable to his Lordship except that of a British subject. "Mr. Adams," gravely observed Lord Howe, "is a decided character." All three of the Commissioners one by one made it clear to Lord Howe that the colonies were irrevocably committed to Independence. There was, therefore, nothing for him to do except to say in the end, "I am sorry, gentlemen, that you have had the trouble of coming so far to so little purpose." Minutes of this interesting conference were jotted down by Henry Strachey, Lord Howe's Secretary, and he has recorded two highly characteristic utterances of Franklin on the occasion. Such, Lord Howe declared, were his feelings towards America, on account of the honor conferred upon his family, by its recognition of the services rendered to it by his eldest brother (Viscount Howe), that, if America should fall, he would feel and lament it like the loss of a brother. Franklin's answer to this generous outburst is thus recorded by Strachey. "Dr. Franklin (with an easy air, a collected countenance, a bow, a smile, and all that *naïveté* which sometimes appeared in his conversation and often in his writings), My Lord, we will use our utmost endeavors to save your Lordship that mortification." Later, when Lord Howe assured Franklin that it was the commerce,

the strength, the men of America rather than her money that Great Britain wanted, Franklin, ever alive to the military advantage possessed by the Colonies in the amazing capacity for reproduction of their people, replied, "Ay, My Lord, we have in America a pretty considerable manufactory of men." Strachey supposed that he meant to convey by this remark the impression that the American army was a large one, but Lord Howe knew Franklin's turn of mind better, and penciled on the margin of Strachey's manuscript, "No; their increasing population."

Lord Howe seems to have borne himself on this occasion in every respect like a gallant gentleman. When the three members of Congress reached the shore opposite to Staten Island, after the journey from Philadelphia, which Adams had made on horseback, and Franklin and Rutledge in chairs, they found a barge from him awaiting them with an officer in it as a hostage for their safe return from the island. Adams suggested that the hostage should be dispensed with, and his colleagues, he tells us in his grandiose way, "exulted in the proposition and agreed to it instantly." The fact was communicated to the officer, who bowed his assent, and re-embarked with the Americans. When Lord Howe saw the barge approaching the beach of the island, he walked down to meet it, and the Hessian regiment, which attended him, was drawn up in two lines facing each other. Upon seeing that the officer, whom he had sent over to the Jersey shore, had returned, Lord Howe exclaimed, "Gentlemen, you make me a very high compliment, and you may depend upon it I will consider it as the most sacred of things." When the party landed, he shook hands very cordially with Franklin, and, after being introduced to Adams and Rutledge, conducted the three between the two files of Hessians to the house where the conference was to take place; all

four chatting pleasantly together as they walked along. Adams, who was far too intense an American not to hate savagely a Hessian, fresh from the cattle-pen of his Prince, described these soldiers as "looking fierce as ten Furies, and making all the grimaces, and gestures, and motions of their muskets with bayonets fixed, which, I suppose, military etiquette requires, but which we neither understood nor regarded." The house, which was to be the scene of the conference, was dilapidated and dirty from military use, but the apartment, into which the Americans were ushered, had been hung with moss and branches by Lord Howe with such refinement of taste that Adams subsequently pronounced it "not only wholesome, but romantically elegant." After reaching it, the whole party, including the colonel of the Hessian regiment, sat down to a collation "of good claret, good bread, cold ham, tongues, and mutton." When the repast was over, the colonel withdrew, the table was cleared and the fruitless conference began.

Nor was the activity of Franklin after his return from England limited to his duties as a member of Congress. If he fell asleep at times, when questions were under discussion by that body, it might well have been because he had no other time to sleep. Shortly after his return, he was elected Chairman of the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety, which was charged with the duty of arming and defending the Province, and of issuing bills of credit to defray the expense. In this office, he proved quite as fertile in expedients as he had done at the time of the Association years before. In the course of a year, the Delaware was effectively protected by forts and batteries and by a marine *chevaux-de-frise*, planned by Franklin himself; so much so that, when a British fleet attempted several years later to ascend the river, its progress was blocked for two months. Other features of the defensive plans adopted by the committee

were row-galleys, fully armed and manned, of which Josiah Quincy spoke in a letter to Washington as "Dr. Franklin's row-galleys."

In the morning at six [Franklin wrote to Priestley], I am at the Committee of Safety, appointed by the Assembly to put the Province in a state of defence; which committee holds till near nine, when I am at the Congress, and that sits till after four in the afternoon. Both these bodies proceed with the greatest unanimity, and their meetings are well attended. It will scarce be credited in Britain, that men can be as diligent with us from zeal for the public good, as with you for thousands per annum. Such is the difference between uncorrupted new states, and corrupted old ones.

To the period when the Committee of Safety was holding its sessions belongs a story which William Temple Franklin tells us of his grandfather. Some of the more intolerant Pennsylvanians asked the Committee to call upon the Episcopal clergy to refrain from prayers for the King.

The measure [said Franklin, who always preserved his sense of proportion] is quite unnecessary; for the Episcopal clergy, to my certain knowledge, have been constantly praying, these twenty years, that "*God would give to the king and his council wisdom*"; and we all know that not the least notice has ever been taken of that prayer.

While a member of Congress and the Committee of Safety, Franklin was also elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, but, as the members of that body were still required before taking their seats to pledge their allegiance to the King, he was unwilling actually to take his seat. The Assembly was under the dominion of John Dickinson, the leader of the Proprietary Party, and was very reluctant to break finally with the Crown.

Nevertheless, it re-elected Franklin to Congress, though he alone of the nine delegates, elected from Pennsylvania to that body, was unhesitatingly in favor of independence. This position of isolation he was not condemned to occupy long. At a subsequent election, the party in Pennsylvania, which shared Franklin's views, obtained the upper hand, followed the lead of Congress in repudiating all authority derived from the King and declared the Proprietary Government dissolved. For a time, there was no government of any kind in Pennsylvania for even the most elementary needs of society. The result, however, was an impressive illustration of the fact that all government is by no means on paper, for, at a later period of his life, Franklin told Sir Samuel Romilly that, while this anarchical condition lasted, order was perfectly preserved in every part of Pennsylvania, and that no man, who should have attempted to take advantage of the situation, for the purpose of evading the payment of a debt, could have endured the contempt with which he would have been visited.

The first step towards the restoration of civil government was taken by the Committee of Safety. It advised the people of Pennsylvania to elect delegates to a conference; they responded by doing so, and the delegates met at Philadelphia, sat five days, renounced allegiance to the King, took an oath of obedience to Congress and issued a call to the people to elect delegates to meet in convention and to form a constitution. At the election, which ensued, Franklin was one of the eight delegates elected from Philadelphia, and, when the convention met, he was unanimously chosen its President. On account of his duties as a member of Congress, his attendance upon the sessions of the convention was irregular, but it was regular enough to exert a marked influence over the proceedings of the body. In one respect, that is in the adoption of a single legislative chamber, the constitution framed by the

convention bore the unmistakable impress of his peculiar political ideas.[1]

A few weeks after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, Franklin received a long letter from Dubourg addressed to "My Dear Master," which justified at least the inference that Vergennes leaned towards the cause of the Colonies. Encouraged by this letter, Congress elected three envoys to represent America in France: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Silas Deane. Deane was already in France. Jefferson was compelled by the ill health of his wife to decline, and Arthur Lee, then in London, was elected in his stead.

After a voyage of thirty days in the *Reprisal*, commanded by Captain Wickes, a small war-vessel in the service of Congress, Franklin reached Quiberon Bay. Thence he proceeded by land to Nantes and from Nantes to Paris. After his arrival at Paris, he lodged at the Hôtel d'Hambourg, in the Rue de l'Université, until he found a home in the house at Passy placed at his disposal by M. Donatien LeRay de Chaumont. For a time, he courted retirement, but, as France was drawn more and more closely into concert with the American rebels, his activity became more and more open, until the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga induced that country to abandon the

[1] Franklin's three political hobbies were gratuitous public service, a plural executive and a single legislature. Through his influence, the second and third of these two ideas were engrafted upon the Revolutionary Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania, and were later ably defended by him, when assailed. The manner in which he illustrated his opposition to a bi-cameral legislature is well-known. "Has not," he said, "the famous political Fable of the Snake, with two Heads and one Body, some useful Instruction contained in it? She was going to a Brook to drink, and in her Way was to pass thro' a Hedge, a Twig of which opposed her direct course; one Head chose to go on the right side of the Twig, the other on the left; so that time was spent in the Contest, and, before the Decision was completed, the poor Snake died with thirst." As far as carrying the idea of gratuitous public service into execution was concerned, Franklin, of course, might as well have attempted to grow pineapples in the squares of Philadelphia.

policy of connivance and secret assistance, which it had pursued behind the screen, supplied by the commercial adventures of Caron de Beaumarchais, even before Franklin landed in Europe, and to enter into the treaty of alliance with the United States which made Adams, Lee and himself our fully acknowledged representatives at the French Court. The circumstances, under which the news of Burgoyne's capitulation was communicated to Franklin and his colleagues, constitute one of the most thrilling moments in history. The messenger, who conveyed it, was Jonathan Loring Austin, a young New Englander, and the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of War; and he was sent in a swift vessel for the very purpose by the State of Massachusetts. "Whatever in thy wise providence thou seest best to do with the young man, we beseech thee most fervently, at all events, to preserve the packet," is the tactless petition that Dr. Cooper is said to have addressed to Heaven on the Sunday before Austin sailed. The rumor of his coming preceded his arrival at Passy, and, when his chaise was heard in the court of the Hôtel de Chaumont, Deane, Arthur and William Lee, Ralph Izard, Dr. Bancroft, Beaumarchais and Franklin went out to meet him. "Sir," said Franklin, "*is* Philadelphia taken?" "Yes, sir," replied Austin. At this Franklin clasped his hands and turned as if to go back into the house. "But, sir," said Austin, "I have greater news than that. General Burgoyne and his whole army are prisoners of war!" The night of American adversity was now for the first time lit up by a real augury of dawn, and the treaties of amity and commerce and alliance between France and the United States, in the existing state of French feeling, followed almost as a matter of course.

When, weak from his long voyage, Franklin started out on the journey from the seashore to Paris, which led him at one point through the forest haunts of a bloodthirsty gang of robbers, he was seventy years of age. "Yet," he could

truly declare some ten years later to George Whatley, "had I gone at seventy, it would have cut off twelve of the most active years of my life, employed too in matters of the greatest importance." These were indeed years of precious service to his country and of a fame for himself as resplendent as any in modern history which lacks the lustre of military glory. What Washington was to America in the field, Franklin was to her in the foreign relations upon which it may well be doubted whether the success of her arms did not at times depend. To obtain material aid in the form of money and munitions of war, soldiers and fleets from the one powerful country in Europe, which manifested a disposition to side actively with America, was the cardinal object of American policy after the outbreak of the Revolution, and rarely has any man ever been more richly qualified for the accomplishment of any object than was Franklin for the accomplishment of this. In the first place, his liberal and sympathetic nature, with its unrivalled capacity for assimilating foreign usages and habits of thought and feeling, slid without the slightest friction into every recess of its French environment. This was a fact of supreme importance in the case of a people so distinctive in point of race and temperament, and so irredeemably wedded to their own national prepossessions and prejudices as the French. Doubtless, Franklin was too wise a man not to have courted French favor, in a social sense, to some extent as a matter of political policy. Then, too, there is every reason to know that he was sincerely grateful to France for the benefits which she showered upon his country and himself. But it was mainly the spell of La Belle France herself, with her cordial appeal to his delight in existence, which finally produced the state of mutual affection that enabled him to say with truth that he loved the French and that they loved him. What this meant to our cause we can easily divine when we remember how wholly some of the colleagues of Franklin

failed to recommend themselves to the good will of the people, whose good will it was of the utmost concern to America that they should conciliate, or to abstain from untimely dissensions. The exact reverse of what Franklin said of himself might be said of them. They disliked the French People, and the French People disliked them.[1] More than once it required all the management of Franklin to placate feelings that they had aroused in Vergennes, the French Minister, by lack of tact or good judgment. On one occasion, after being lectured by Adams, on the subject of the American paper money, held by citizens of France, Vergennes wrote to Franklin that nothing could be less analogous than the language of Adams to the alliance subsisting between his Majesty and the United States. In the same letter, he asked Franklin to lay the whole correspondence between Adams and himself before Congress, adding that his Majesty flattered himself that that Assembly, inspired with principles different from those which Mr. Adams had discovered, would convince his Majesty that they knew how to prize those marks of favor which the King had constantly shown to the United States. No choice was left to Franklin except to comply with the request and to do what he could to satisfy Vergennes that the sentiments of Congress and of Americans generally were very different from those of Adams. But unfortunately, before the correspondence between Adams and Vergennes could reach Congress, Adams had again, by his officious conduct in another particular, elicited a sharp rebuke from Vergennes. This correspondence, too, Vergennes requested Franklin to lay before Congress, which Franklin did

[1] In his Diary John Adams states shortly after his arrival in France that it was said among other things that Arthur Lee had given offence by an unhappy disposition, and by indiscreet speeches before servants and others concerning the French nation and government—despising and cursing them.

with comments not more severe than the occasion called for, but which the pride of Adams, already deeply infected with the jealousy of Franklin, which he shared with Arthur Lee, so far as his manlier and wholesomer nature allowed, never fully forgave. "He," Vergennes said of Adams, in a letter to La Luzerne, "possesses a rigidity, a pedantry, an arrogance and a vanity which render him unfit to treat political questions."

After peace was restored between Great Britain and the United States, the strictures of Adams upon Vergennes and France became so imprudent and outspoken that Franklin wrote to Robert Morris:

I hope the ravings of a certain mischievous madman here against France and its ministers, which I hear of every day, will not be regarded in America, so as to diminish in the least the happy union that has hitherto subsisted between the two nations, and which is indeed the solid foundation of our present importance in Europe.

Four months later, Franklin, to use his own words, hazarded a mortal enmity by making this communication to Robert R. Livingston:

I ought not, however, to conceal from you, that one of my Colleagues is of a very different Opinion from me in these Matters. He thinks the French Minister one of the greatest Enemies of our Country, that he would have straitned our Boundaries, to prevent the Growth of our People; contracted our Fishery, to obstruct the Increase of our Seamen; and retained the Royalists among us, to keep us divided; that he privately opposes all our Negociations with foreign Courts, and afforded us, during the War, the Assistance we receiv'd, only to keep it alive, that we might be so much the more weaken'd by it; that to think of Gratitude to France is the greatest of Follies, and that to be influenc'd by it would ruin us. He makes no Secret of his having these Opinions, expresses them publicly, sometimes in presence of English Min-

isters, and speaks of hundreds of Instances which he could produce in Proof of them.

All this Franklin believed to be

as imaginary as I know his Fancies to be, that Count de V. and myself are continually plotting against him, and employing the News-Writers of Europe to depreciate his Character, &c. But as Shakespear says, "Trifles light as Air, &c." I am persuaded, however, that he means well for his Country, is always an honest Man, often a wise one, but sometimes, and in some things, absolutely out of his senses.

A clever and just flash of characterization but for the usual inability of Franklin to refer abnormal conduct to anything short of dementia.[1] In the latter part of the same year, Franklin again had occasion to write to Robert Morris,

My Apprehension that the Union between France and our States might be diminished by Accounts from hence, was occasioned by the extravagant and violent Language held here by a Public Person, in public Company, which had that Tendency; and it was natural for me to think his Letters might hold the same Language, in which I was right; for I have since had Letters from Boston informing me of it. Luckily here, and I hope there, it is imputed to the true Cause, a Disorder in the Brain, which, tho' not constant, has its Fits too frequent.

Apart from more general considerations, as Franklin was, at the very time that Adams was holding this kind

[1] Deprived of its epigrammatic form, this estimate does not differ so very greatly from that of Jefferson a few years later: "He is vain, irritable and a bad calculator of the force and probable effects of the motives which govern men. This is all the ill which can possibly be said of him. He is as disinterested as the being who made him; he is profound in his views and accurate in his judgment, except when a knowledge of the world is necessary to form a judgment. He is so amiable, that I pronounce you will love him if ever you become acquainted with him. He would be, as he was, a great man in Congress."

of discourse, soliciting more money from Vergennes for the United States, it was natural enough that he should fear the tendency of such ungrateful and provoking language to chill the liberality of the French Minister. It is agreeable, however, to recollect that in the succeeding year the able, upright and patriotic statesman, who had to such a conspicuous degree the defects of his virtues, was so far restored to reason, that Franklin could write to William Temple Franklin that he had walked to Auteuil on Saturday to dine with Mr. A. &c., with whom he went on comfortably.

As to how far Arthur Lee succeeded in ingratiating himself with Vergennes, the correspondence of that Minister with the French Minister in America enables us to judge without difficulty. In one letter, he wrote that he had too good an opinion of the intelligence and wisdom of the members of Congress and of all true patriots to suppose that they would allow themselves to be led astray by the representations of a man (Lee) whose character they ought to know.

As to Dr. Franklin [he continued], his conduct leaves nothing for Congress to desire. It is as zealous and patriotic, as it is wise and circumspect; and you may affirm with assurance, on all occasions where you think proper, that the method he pursues is much more efficacious than it would be if he were to assume a tone of importunity in multiplying his demands, and above all in supporting them by menaces, to which we should neither give credence nor value, and which would only tend to render him personally disagreeable.

The writer might as well have added "as is Arthur Lee." In another letter, Vergennes stated that the four millions more that France had decided to grant Dr. Franklin would convince Congress that they had "no occasion to employ the false policy of Mr. Izard and Mr. Lee to procure succors."[1]

[1] On Oct. 29, 1778, Vergennes finally wrote to Gérard, the French Minister at Philadelphia, that his fear of Lee and of *ses entours* made the

For very different reasons, even Jay, with his admirable character, did not achieve any success in dealing with the French people beyond the kind of success which the French themselves damn with the phrase *succès d'estime*. The complaint that M. Grand made of him, when he was in Spain, "that he always appeared very much buttoned up," was hardly less applicable to him when he was transferred to Paris as one of our Peace Commissioners. "Mr. Jay," diarizes Adams, "likes Frenchmen as little as Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard did. He says they are not a moral people; they know not what it is; he don't like any Frenchman; the Marquis de Lafayette is clever, but he is a Frenchman."

John Laurens, too, when he came over to Paris to solicit money for the American army, *beau sabreur* as he was, handled the French as awkwardly as the rest. "He

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communication of state secrets to him impossible, and he instructed Gérard to inform Congress that Lee's conduct had "created the highest disgust" in the courts of France and Spain. It is doubtful whether any man of the same degree of parts, courage and patriotic constancy as Arthur Lee was ever more irredeemably condemned by the general verdict of his contemporaries or posterity. It would be a profitless task to bring together the most notable of these judgments. Jefferson summed up most of them in a few words: "Dr. Lee," he said, "was his (Franklin's) principal calumniator, a man of much malignity, who, besides enlisting his whole family in the same hostility, was enabled, as the agent of Massachusetts with the British Government, to infuse it into that State with considerable effect. Mr. Izard, the Doctor's enemy also, but from a pecuniary transaction, never countenanced these charges against him. Mr. Jay, Silas Deane, Mr. Laurens, his colleagues also, ever maintained towards him unlimited confidence and respect." Silas Deane, the most efficient envoy except Franklin sent abroad by Congress during the Revolution, derived a degree of unaffected pleasure from the respect felt for Franklin in France that contrasts most favorably with the base jealousy of Arthur Lee and the ignoble jealousy of John Adams. After telling how the French populace on a certain occasion showed Franklin a measure of deference seldom paid to their first princes of the blood, he says: "When he attended the operas and plays, similar honors were paid him, and I confess I felt a joy and pride which was pure and honest, though not disinterested, for I considered it an honor to be known to be an American and his acquaintance."

was indefatigable, while he staid," Franklin wrote to William Carmichael, "and took true Pains, but he *brusqu'd* the Ministers too much, and I found after he was gone that he had thereby given more Offence than I could have imagin'd." The truth is that, until the watchful detachment of Adams and Jay from their foreign environment became of some service to the United States in helping to assure to them the full fruits of their victory in the final shuffle of diplomacy over the Treaty of Peace, Franklin after the return of Silas Deane to America was the only one of our diplomatic representatives who can be said to have earned his salt in France.[1] The rest, so far from promoting the objects of the French mission, did much to jeopard its success. The United States could well have afforded to keep them all at home and to pay them double the amount of the salaries which were wasted upon them abroad. They either could not rise above the limitations and prejudices of foreigners in dealing with a people peculiarly tenacious of their own national views and

[1] John Adams admits in his Diary that Deane was "active, diligent, subtle and successful, having accomplished the great purpose of his mission to advantage." After the recall of Deane from France, Franklin wrote of him to Henry Laurens: "Having lived intimately with him now fifteen months, the greatest part of the time in the same House, and been a constant witness of his public Conduct, I can not omit giving this Testimony, tho. unasked, in his Behalf, that I esteem him a faithful, active, and able Minister, who, to my Knowledge, has done in various ways great and important Service to his Country, whose Interests I wish may always, by every one in her employ, be as much and as effectually promoted." On other occasions, Franklin spoke in equally laudatory terms of the abilities and services of Deane. But when Deane, soured by the persistent malevolence of Arthur Lee and the injustice of Congress, was weak enough to fall away from "the glorious cause," Franklin gave him up. "I see no place for him but England," he wrote to Robert Morris. "He continues, however, to sit croaking at Ghent chagrined, discontented, and dispirited." Franklin, however, was too nice a judge of conduct, and of the balanced considerations, which have to be taken into account in passing upon it, not to refer later to Deane as "poor, unhappy Deane,"—language such as he would have been the last man in the world to use with regard to a perfidious scoundrel like Benedict Arnold.

characteristics, or were too lacking in diplomatic instinct and *savoir faire* to hold their own grating idiosyncracies of temper and disposition in check, when it was of the highest importance to their country that they should do so; or they were so restive under the pre-eminence of Franklin as to be unable to control the envy and ill-feeling, which harassed his peace, and tended to discredit the cause, in which they were engaged. Congress did not do many wise things in regard to our interests in France during the Revolution, but undoubtedly it did one, when it finally brought the discord of its envoys in that country to an end by declining to accept the resignation of Franklin and appointing him the sole Ambassador of the United States at Paris.[1] Under no circumstances, does his suc-

[1] The Diary of John Adams shows that shortly after he arrived in France Franklin took pains to lay before him the lamentable situation created by the impracticable tempers of the Lees and Izard. It would have been well for the reputation of Adams if this conversation had resulted in a thorough understanding between Franklin and himself, but the bias that he brought to France as a member of the Adams-Lee faction in Congress and the inability of his egotistical, jealous, suspicious and bustling, though honorable and fearless, nature, to reconcile itself to the overshadowing fame and influence of Franklin at the French Court drew him into working relations with Arthur Lee and Izard, which abundantly verified all that Franklin had said to him about them. "There are two men in the world," he declares in his Diary, "who are men of honor and integrity, I believe, but whose prejudices and violent tempers would raise quarrels in the Elysian fields, if not in Heaven." At times the vanity of Adams—easily mortified, easily elated as all vanity is—was humbled by some fresh proof of the dwarfing prominence of Franklin. "Neither Lee nor myself is looked upon of much consequence," he observes in his Diary. On another occasion, when Arthur Lee suggested that the papers of the mission should be kept in a room in his own house, Adams objected for the reason, among others, that nine tenths of the public letters would ever be carried where Dr. Franklin was. These were but temporary reactions. When down, the vanity of Adams was soon on its legs again. The reminder given by Vergennes to the officious, tactless reasonings and strictures, to which he was subjected by Adams, that Franklin was the sole American plenipotentiary in France, and the steps that the latter was compelled to take, both by the request of Vergennes and his own sense of the peril, that such injudicious conduct on the part of Adams signified to the American cause, to smooth over the rupture, sent Adams off to Holland in a re-

cess in obtaining succor for America from France stand out so clearly as when contrasted with the futile missions of Arthur Lee, William Lee, Ralph Izard, Francis Dana and John Jay to other courts than that of France. So far from obtaining any material aid for the United States from the countries, to which they were accredited, and should never have been sent,[1] they had to fall back upon Franklin himself for their own subsistence; though it is only fair to them to say that some of them were allowed by these countries too little freedom of approach to make an impression of any kind upon them, good or otherwise. For the bad feeling entertained by Adams, Lee and Izard towards Franklin there is no valid reason for holding Franklin responsible. It is plain that he did not lack the inclination to be on friendly terms with Adams; and there is no evidence that he in any way provoked the malice which he suffered at the hands of Arthur Lee, or the passionate animosity which he excited in Ralph Izard. As late as 1780, after the return of Adams to Europe as a peace

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sentful but subdued state of mind. But his success in negotiating a loan in Holland and the prospect of engaging in a matter of such supreme importance as the final negotiations for peace lifted him up to giddy heights of intoxicated self-importance again. Referring to the loan in his Diary, he says: "The compliment of *Monsieur, Vous êtes le Washington de la négociation* (Sir, you are the Washington of the negotiation) was repeated to me by more than one person. . . . A few of these compliments would kill Franklin if they should come to his ears." His observations in his Diary on Jay and Franklin, when he came over to France to participate with them in the final negotiations for peace, are equally characteristic. "Between two as subtle spirits as any in this world, the one malicious, the other, I think honest, I shall have a delicate, a nice, a critical part to act. Franklin's cunning will be to divide us; to this end he will provoke, he will insinuate, he will intrigue, he will manœuvre. My curiosity will at least be employed in observing his invention and his artifice."

[1] "I think," said Franklin in a letter to Charles W. F. Dumas, in 1778, "that a young State like a young Virgin, should modestly stay at home, & wait the Application of Suitors for an Alliance with her; and not run about offering her Amity to all the World; and hazarding their Refusal." "Our Virgin," he added a line or so later, "is a jolly one; and tho at present not very rich, Will in time be a great Fortune."

commissioner, Franklin wrote to William Carmichael that Adams and himself lived on good terms with each other, though the former, he added, had never communicated anything of his business to him, and he had made no inquiries of him. If Franklin did not live on good terms with Arthur Lee, it was because no one, unless it were Adams, or Ralph Izard, when drawn to Lee by common jealousy of Franklin, could live on good terms with a man whose character was so hopelessly soured and perverted by suspicion and spleen. It was doubtless with entire truth that Franklin in a letter to William Carmichael, in which he termed Lee the most malicious enemy that he ever had, declared that there was not the smallest cause for his enmity. It had been inspired in England, as it had been revived in France, simply by the brooding desire of Lee to displace Franklin. In 1771, he made it plain in a letter from England to Samuel Adams that Franklin, in his opinion, was not too good to be the instrument of Lord Hillsborough's treachery in pretending that all designs against the charter of Massachusetts had been laid aside.

> The possession of a profitable office at will, the having a son in a high post at pleasure, the grand purpose of his residence here being to effect a change in the government of Pennsylvania, for which administration must be cultivated and courted [Lee wrote], are circumstances which, joined with the temporizing conduct he has always held in American affairs, preclude every rational hope that, in an open contest between an oppressive administration and a free people, Dr. Franklin can be a faithful advocate for the latter.

In another letter he intimated a suspicion that Dr. Franklin had been "bribed to betray his trust." The motive for such communications is made clear enough by still another letter that he sent over to Boston stating that, while Dr. Franklin frequently assured him that he would sail for Philadelphia in a few weeks, he believed he

would not quit them till he was gathered to his fathers.[1] The insidious calumnies that Lee sowed in Massachusetts, when he was coveting Franklin's agency for that colony, were only too effective for a time in creating even in the minds of such men as Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Josiah Quincy an impression unfavorable to Franklin's fidelity to the American cause. How little based on any real misgivings as to the character of the man, whose place he craved, were the innuendoes and accusations of Lee, may be inferred from his statement at the time of the Privy Council outrage that Franklin bore the assaults of Wedderburn "with a firmness and equanimity which conscious integrity can inspire." In a letter to Lord Shelburne in 1776, he even spoke of Franklin as "our *Pater Patriæ*."

In France, the same sense of having a young man's revenue withered out by tedious expectation led to similar misrepresentations and intrigue. This time, the object was to bring about the transfer of Franklin from France, where the jealousy of Lee was incessantly inflamed by his great reputation and influence, to some other post, and the appointment of Lee himself as his successor. If the change had not been such as to foreshadow utter ruin to American interests in France, the letters that Arthur Lee wrote to his brother Richard Henry Lee in the prosecution of these aims would be little less than ludicrous. "My idea of adapting characters and places is this," he said in one letter, "Dr. F. to Vienna, as the first, most

[1] Franklin was entirely cognizant of the motive by which Lee was influenced. Referring in a letter to Thomas Cushing, dated July 7, 1773, to censure with which he had been visited for supposed neglect in not sending earlier intelligence to Massachusetts of certain English measures affecting her welfare, he said, "This Censure, tho. grievous, does not so much surprize me, as I apprehended from the Beginning, that between the Friends of an old Agent, my Predecessor, who thought himself hardly us'd in his Dismission, and those of a young one impatient for the Succession, my situation was not likely to be a very comfortable one, as my Faults could scarce pass unobserved."

respectable, and quiet; Mr. Deane to Holland. . . . France remains the centre of political activity, and here, therefore, I should choose to be employed." There was but one way, he said in another letter to his brother, of bringing to an end the neglect, dissipation, and private schemes, which he saw in every department of the American Mission at Paris, and that was the plan he had before suggested of appointing the Dr. *honoris causa* to Vienna, Mr. Deane to Holland, and Mr. Jennings to Madrid, and of leaving him (Lee) at Paris. To Samuel Adams he wrote that he had been at the several courts of Spain, Vienna and Berlin, and found that of France to be the great wheel that moved them all. He would, therefore, be much obliged to Adams for remembering that he should prefer being at the court of France.

Lee was a man of considerable ability, though his incurable defects of disposition and temper almost wholly deprived him of the profitable use of it, and he was from first to last, when in Europe, loyal to the American cause. But, if there ever was a person born under the malignant sign, Scorpio, it was he. He was

> "More peevish, cross and splenetic
> Than dog distract or monkey sick."

In the course of his suspicious, jealous and quarrelsome life he appears to have inflicted a venomous sting upon almost every human being that ever crossed the path of his inordinate and intriguing ambition. In the monopoly of intelligence and public virtue that he arrogated to himself he was not unlike the French woman who was credited by Franklin with the assertion that she met with nobody but herself that was always in the right. With a few exceptions, no prominent American in France, when he was in that country, escaped his insidious defamation. Silas Deane was the accomplice of Beaumarchais in his

effort to make the United States pay for free gifts of the French King. Franklin was a cunning rogue ever on the watch to line the pockets of his grandnephew, Jonathan Williams; indeed Lee did not scruple to term him "the father of corruption"; every day gave him fresh reasons for suspecting William Carmichael; John Paul Jones was merely the captain of "a cruising job of Chaumont and Dr. Franklin." And so on with the other contemporaries, whose character he did his best to tarnish with the breath of calumny, ever actuated as he was by the sinister, backward-spelling disposition which

> "Never gives to truth and virtue that
> Which simpleness and merit purchaseth."

What both Lee and Adams could not forgive in Franklin was the fact that, though there were three American envoys at Paris, the French Ministry and People would have it that there was only one, "*le digne Franklin*,"[1] "*le plus grand philosophe du siècle*," "*l'honneur de l'Amérique, et de l'humanité.*" The wounded sense of self-importance, awakened by this fact, assumed in Adams, except in his more extravagant moments, no worse form than that of quickened self-assertion, or the charge that Franklin was grown too inert, from years and physical infirmities, to conduct the routine business of the mission with the proper degree of order and system, or was too susceptible to social and academic flattery to keep

[1] On one occasion this expression gave rise to an incident that is worth recalling. We tell it as it is told by Parton. A large cake was sent to the apartment in which the envoys were assembled, bearing this inscription: *Le digne Franklin*—the worthy Franklin. Upon reading the inscription, Mr. Deane said: "As usual, Doctor, we have to thank you for our accommodation, and to appropriate your present to our joint use." "Not at all," said Franklin, "this must be intended for all the Commissioners; only these French people can not write English. They mean no doubt, Lee, Deane, Franklin." "That might answer," remarked the magnanimous Lee, "but we know that whenever they remember us at all they always put you first."

a vigilant eye upon the more selfish side of French policy. But in the case of Lee, lacerated vanity not only led him along finally to the conclusion that Deane and Franklin were both rascals, but early convinced him that all their transactions, even the simplest, where he was concerned, were shaped by a desire to slight or affront him, or to deprive him of his just privileges and standing as one of the Commissioners. He had hardly been in France a year before his perverse pen was lecturing and scolding Franklin as if he were one of the most arbitrary and inconsiderate of men instead of one of the most reasonable and considerate. At first, Franklin did not reply to such letters, but his failure to reply simply supplied Lee with another excuse for scolding. At last, Lee, after taxing him with tardiness in settling the accounts of the Commissioners, and with keeping him in the dark about the mission on which M. Gérard had been sent to America, expressed the hope that he would not treat this letter from him as he had many others with the indignity of not answering it.

It is true [said Franklin], that I have omitted answering some of your Letters, particularly your angry ones, in which you, with very magisterial Airs, school'd and documented me, as if I had been one of your Domestics. I saw in the strongest Light the Importance of our living in decent Civility towards each other, while our great Affairs were depending here. I saw your jealous, suspicious, malignant and quarrelsome Temper, which was daily manifesting itself against Mr. Deane, and almost every other Person you had any Concern with: I therefore pass'd your Affronts in Silence; did not answer but burnt your angry Letters, and received you when I next saw you with the same Civility as if you had never wrote them.

These words are taken from a letter in which Franklin replied in detail to all the grievances vented in Lee's letter. On the day before, he had written a curter

reply which gives us a good idea of what his anger was at flood-tide.

It is true [this reply began], I have omitted answering some of your Letters. I do not like to answer angry Letters. I hate Disputes. I am old, can not have long to live, have much to do and no time for Altercation. If I have often receiv'd and borne your Magisterial Snubbings and Rebukes without Reply, ascribe it to the right Causes, my Concern for the Honour & Success of our Mission, which would be hurt by our Quarrelling, my Love of Peace, my Respect for your good Qualities, and my Pity of your Sick Mind, which is forever tormenting itself, with its Jealousies, Suspicions & Fancies that others mean you ill, wrong you, or fail in Respect for you. If you do not cure yourself of this Temper it will end in Insanity, of which it is the Symptomatick Forerunner, as I have seen in several Instances. God preserve you from so terrible an Evil: and for his sake pray suffer me to live in quiet.

The petition was not heeded. Cut off by his impracticable temper and the dis-esteem of the French Ministry from any participation in the more important transactions of the Mission, the industrious malice of Lee found employment in accusations of peculation against the other agents of the United States in France and in petty refinements over the proper methods of keeping the accounts and papers of the Commissioners. Everything that he touched threw out thorns and exuded acrid juices. Franklin might well have said of him what he said of his brother, William Lee, that he was not only a disputatious but a very artful man. He pursued Deane with such plausible misrepresentations, when the latter sought justice at the hands of Congress, that the unhappy man was finally hurried, to use Franklin's phrase, into joining his friend, Arnold. How he harried Jonathan Williams, we have already seen. So well understood was his litigious, malevolent temper that, when the State of Virginia

desired to purchase arms and military stores in France, several merchants refused to have any dealings with him, and one firm dealt with him only to be involved in the usual web of fine-spun suspicion and controversy.

I hope, however [wrote Franklin to Patrick Henry, at the time Governor of Virginia, who had solicited Franklin's assistance in the matter], that you will at length be provided with what you want, which I think you might have been long since, if the Affair had not been in Hands, which Men of Honour and Candour here are generally averse to dealing with, as not caring to hazard Quarrels and Abuses in the settlement of their Accounts.

He dared not meddle, he said, with the dispute in which Lee was engaged, "being charg'd by the Congress to endeavour at maintaining a good Understanding with their other Servants," which was, "indeed, a hard task with some of them," he declared.

As his acquaintance with Lee and his brother, William Lee, extended, Franklin became more and more wary in dealing with them. This was illustrated in his attitude towards the papers of Thomas Morris, the brother of Robert Morris, and the Commercial Agent of the United States at Nantes. When this gentleman, who, according to one of his contemporaries, "turned out the greatest drunkard the world ever produced," had duly paid the forfeit of his bibulous life, William Lee, with the aid of an order from the French Ministry, secured possession of all his papers, public and private, and, when on the eve of setting out for Germany, placed the trunk containing them sealed in the custody of Franklin. The key, Franklin told him, he would rather have in the keeping of Arthur Lee. A correspondence followed between Franklin and John Ross, who had obtained an order from Congress for the delivery of the trunk to him. If it had been Pandora's

box, Franklin could not have undertaken the delivery of the papers in a more gingerly manner.

I am glad [he wrote to Ross], an Order is come for delivering them to you. But as the Dispute about them may hereafter be continued, and Papers suspected to be embezzled by somebody; and as I have sign'd a terrible long Receipt for the Trunk, of which I have no copy, and only remember that it appear'd to be constructed with all the Circumspection of the Writers Motto, *Non incautus futuri* and that it fill'd a Half Sheet so full there was scarce Room for the Names of the four Evidences he requir'd to witness it; I beg you will not expect me to send it to you at Nantes but appoint who you please to receive it for you here. For I think I must deliver it before Witnesses, who may certify the State of the Seals; nothing being more likely than that Seals on a Trunk may rub off in the Carriage on so long a Journey; and then I should be expos'd to the Artful Suggestions of some who do not love me, & whom I conceive to be of very malignant Dispositions.

Afterwards, when Arthur Lee informed Franklin that, unless he was furnished with money by him, he would have to give up the thought of proceeding to Spain, Franklin replied dryly: "As I can not furnish the Expence, and there is not, in my Opinion, any Likelihood at Present of your being received at that Court, I think your Resolution of returning forthwith to America is both wise and honest." And, even when he supposed that he was finally rid of the gad-fly, which had annoyed him so long, and that Lee was off for America, with his poisoned ink-well and busy pen, Franklin took pains that he should not have everything his own way, though a thousand leagues distant. "There are some Americans returning hence," he wrote to Samuel Cooper, "with whom our people should be upon their guard, as carrying with them a spirit of enmity to this country. Not being liked here themselves, they

dislike the people; for the same reason, indeed, they ought to dislike all that know them."

Three days later, he wrote to Joseph Reed, of Pennsylvania, a letter in which, after denying a false statement made about the writer by Lee, he said, "He proposes, I understand, to settle in your Government. I caution you to beware of him; for, in sowing Suspicions and Jealousies, in creating Misunderstandings and Quarrels among friends, in Malice, Subtilty, and indefatigable industry, he has I think no equal." A few days later, he wrote to William Carmichael, "Messrs. Lee and Izard are gone to L'Orient, in order to embark in the *Alliance* together, but they did not travel together from hence. No soul regrets their departure. They separately came to take leave of me, very respectfully offering their services to carry any dispatches, etc."

But gone the gad-fly was not yet. After Lee reached L'Orient, the officers and men of the *Alliance* refused to weigh anchor until certain claims of theirs to wages and prize money were complied with, and, while John Paul Jones, their captain, was away at Paris, engaged in an effort to hasten the payment of the prize-money, Captain Peter Landais, acting under the advice of Arthur Lee and Commodore Gillon, took possession of the ship and sailed off for America. As soon as the news of the mutiny came to Franklin, he suspected that Arthur Lee was at the bottom of it.

I have no doubt [he wrote to Samuel Wharton, in regard to Landais] that your suspicion of his Adviser is well founded. That Genius must either find or make a Quarrel wherever he is. The only excuse for him that his Conduct will admit of, is his being at times out of his Senses. This I always allow, and am persuaded that if some of the many Enemies he provokes do not kill him sooner he will die in a madhouse.

The sequel of this high-handed proceeding afforded

Franklin another opportunity to question Lee's mental soundness. The *Alliance* was not long out before Landais exhibited such flightiness that its passengers deposed him, and placed the ship in command of its first lieutenant. Commenting on the incident, Franklin wrote to Samuel Cooper:

> Dr. Lee's accusation of Capt. Landais for Insanity was probably well founded; as in my Opinion would have been the same Accusation, if it had been brought by Landais against Lee; For tho' neither of them are permanently mad, they are both so at times; and the Insanity of the Latter is the most Mischievous.

How truly high-handed the rape of the *Alliance* was, will be realized, when the reader is told that at the time Landais had been deprived of the captaincy of the *Alliance*, upon the charge of gross misconduct in the glorious engagement between the *Serapis* and the *Bon Homme Richard*, and was looking forward to a court-martial in America upon specifications involving a capital offence; that he had abandoned the ship, and that Jones, who had won imperishable honor and renown in the conflict between the *Serapis* and the *Bon Homme Richard*, had been placed in command of her by Franklin, and had been in command of her for eight months; and that Franklin had in a letter to Landais sternly refused to restore her to him.

Of William Lee, Franklin had, as we have just seen, very much the same opinion that he had of Arthur Lee. When he talked to Franklin of nominating Jonathan Williams, his grandnephew, and Mr. Lloyd in the place of Thomas Morris and himself as the Commercial Agents of the United States at Nantes, Franklin wrote to Williams: "I question whether there be Flesh enough upon the Bone for two to pick. I doubt its being worth your while to

accept of it. I did not thank him for mentioning you because I do not wish to be much oblig'd to him and less to be a little oblig'd."

Not long after this, Franklin had less cause to think well of William Lee than ever. Upon representations being made by Ralph Izard and him to the three Commissioners, Arthur Lee, Deane and Franklin, that, though they had been appointed Ministers to the courts of Berlin, Vienna and Florence by Congress, no provision for their expenses had reached them, the three Commissioners asked what sums they would require. William Lee replied that he could not exactly compute in advance what he would need, but that, if he was empowered to draw upon the banker of the Commissioners, he would certainly only draw from time to time for such sums as were absolutely necessary; and that it was therefore a matter of little importance at what amount the credit was fixed. "It would however look handsome & confidential," he said, "if the sum were two Thousand Louis." Thereupon, Franklin tells us, the Commissioners "did frankly but unwarily give the Orders." Soon afterwards, Deane and Franklin were informed that William Lee and Izard had gone directly to the banker of the Commissioners, and drawn out the whole amount of the credit, and had deposited it to their own account exclusively. After that, even an order from Congress, empowering William Lee and Izard to draw upon the Commissioners for their expenses at foreign courts, was unavailing to open Franklin's purse strings. Doubtless, he wrote with calm irony to the Committee on Foreign Affairs at home, Congress, when it passed its resolution, intended to supply the Commissioners with funds for meeting the drafts of William Lee and Izard. And, to make things still worse for the disappointed beneficiaries of the resolution, he further said: "I could have no intention to distress them, because I must know it is out of my

Power, as their private Fortunes and Credit will enable them at all times to pay their own Expences."

Arthur Lee had taken good care to protect himself against any such afterclaps. In a formal letter to him, refusing to accede to his suggestion that no orders should be drawn upon the banker of the Commissioners, unless signed by all three of the Commissioners, Franklin told him flatly that he did not choose to be obliged to ask Mr. Lee's consent, whenever he might have occasion to draw for his subsistence, as that assent could not be expected from any necessity of a reciprocal compliance on Mr. Franklin's part, Mr. Lee having secured his subsistence by taking into his own disposition 185,000 livres, and his brother, by a deception on the Commissioners, 48,000.

Ralph Izard, of South Carolina, was very closely linked with Arthur Lee in Franklin's mind. Though appointed by Congress Commissioner to the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany at Florence, this court refused to receive him for fear of offending England, and he remained in Paris during the entire period of his appointment. In a letter to James Lovell, Franklin stated that he had made it a constant rule to answer no angry, affronting or abusive letters, of which he had received many, and long ones, from Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard. The hostility of Izard to Franklin, due in the main to the same causes as Arthur Lee's, was whetted partly by the fact that he was not consulted, when the treaty of alliance was entered into between the American Commissioners and France, and partly by the fact that Franklin refused to honor some of his pecuniary applications. In a letter from Passy to Francis Hopkinson, Franklin, as we have seen, said that he deserved Izard's enmity because he might have avoided it by paying him a compliment which he neglected, but elsewhere in his correspondence he rests this enmity upon substantially the same grounds as that of Arthur Lee. When Izard assailed him, because he had not conferred

with him in relation to the treaty of alliance, Franklin replied that he would give his letter a full answer when he had the honor of seeing him. "But," he said, "I must submit to remain some days under the Opinion you appear to have form'd not only of my poor Understanding in the general Interests of America, but of my Defects in Sincerity, Politeness & Attention to your Instructions."

It is doubtful whether a letter in which, in reply to an application for money, he reminded Izard of the latter's own pecuniary independence, was ever sent; but part of it is too pointed not to bear quotation. After dwelling upon the many calls upon the funds in the hands of the Commissioners, it goes on in these words:

> In this Situation of our Affairs, we hope you will not insist on our giving you a farther Credit with our Banker, with whom we are daily in danger of having no farther Credit ourselves. It is not a Year since you received from us the sum of Two Thousand Guineas, which you thought necessary on Acc^{t} of your being to set out immediately for Florence. You have not incurr'd the Expence of that Journey. You are a Gentleman of Fortune. You did not come to France with any Dependence on being maintain'd here with your Family at the Expence of the United States, in the Time of their Distress, and without rendering them the equivalent Service they expected.

Izard seems to have had the kind of temper that heats as readily as iron but cools off as slowly as a footbrick, wrapped up in flannels.[1] Speaking of the indignity, to which Franklin had been subjected in his sight before the Privy

[1] "It must," Adams says in his letter to the Boston *Patriot* of Aug. 21, 1811, with the whiff of bombast that is wafted to us from so many of his vigorous and vivid utterances, "suffice to say that Mr. Izard, with a fund of honor, integrity, candor and benevolence in his character, which must render him eternally estimable in the sight of all moral and social beings, was, nevertheless, the most passionate, and in his passions the most violent and unbridled in his expressions, of any man I ever knew."

Council, he said: "When Dr. Franklin was so unmercifully bespattered by Wedderburn, I sat upon thorns; and had it been me that was so grossly insulted, I should instantly have repelled the attack, in defiance of every consequence." It is not unlikely that he would have been as good as his word, so prompt was the second, who had borne the challenge from Temple to Whately, to give free play to his irascible and imperious nature. But Graydon is our authority for the statement, too, that as long as four years after Izard had returned in the *Alliance* from France to the United States, the name of Franklin could not be mentioned in his presence without hurrying him into a state of excitement.

Altogether, our readers will agree with us, we are sure, in thinking that few things in our national history are calculated to leave a more painful impression upon the mind than the conduct of some of the men, who were supposed to represent the United States abroad, while Franklin, in spite of the jarring discords, of which he was the innocent author, was manfully struggling with the responsibilities which belonged in part to others, but never really rested upon any but his own old shoulders (as he termed them). By character and temperament, in some instances, they were conspicuously unfitted for the delicate tasks of diplomacy, and were too raw and rigidly set in their personal and national prejudices besides ever to succeed in repressing their dislike for the French. There can be no doubt, Jay aside, that they would have quarrelled with each other as rancorously as they did with Franklin but for the cohesion created by their common jealousy of him. How indefensible their attitude towards him was becomes all the more apparent when we recollect that rarely has any man ever been endowed with a mind or nature better fitted to disarm malice than those of Franklin. It is a hard judgment, not to be formed without due allowance for the extent to which the testimony of history

is always suborned by the glamour of a great reputation, but it is nevertheless, we believe, only a just judgment, to declare that Franklin spoke the simple truth when he wrote to William Carmichael, "Lee and Izard are open, and, so far, honourable Enemies; the Adams, if Enemies, are more covered. I never did any of them the least Injury, and can conceive no other Source of their Malice but Envy." The excessive respect, shown him in France by all ranks of people, he said in the same letter, and the little notice taken of them, was a mortifying circumstance, but it was what he could neither prevent nor remedy.

This "excessive respect," or justly deserved fame, as the biographer of Franklin might call it, was another thing which contributed to Franklin's brilliant success at the Court of France. When he arrived in that country, he was no stranger there. His two previous visits to it had made him well acquainted with Turgot, Quesnay, Dupont de Nemours, the elder Mirabeau, Dubourg and Morellet and the other members of the group, known as the Physiocrats, whose speculative passion for Agriculture was one of the active intellectual forces of the time. His literary and scientific attainments had likewise won him the favor of other famous Frenchmen. These are facts of no slight importance, when we recall the extent to which the currents of French thought, on the eve of the French Revolution, were fed and directed by men of letters and philosophers. When Franklin found himself in France, for the third time, he was a member of the Royal Society at London and the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, and had been honored with academic degrees not only by Yale, Harvard and William and Mary in his own country, but by Oxford in England and St. Andrews in Scotland.[1] An edition of his scientific works had been

[1] In the latter part of his life, it must have severely taxed the memory of Franklin to recollect all the honors paid to him by educational institutions and learned societies of one kind or another. The honorary degree

translated into French by his friend Dubourg, and his *Way to Wealth* had been translated into the same language, and distributed broadcast by bishops and curés among the members of their flocks as incentives to industry and frugality. It was in France, too, that D'Alibard had verified the sublime hypothesis of Franklin by drawing down the lightning from the clouds. Moreover, before he left England at the end of his second mission to that country, his activity and prominence in resisting the arbitrary measures of the British Ministry had made his political influence and standing thoroughly familiar to the French Cabinet, which had for many years kept a close watch upon every movement or event that portended a revolt of the American Colonies. Along with these solid claims to the attention and respect of the French people were certain other circumstances that strongly tended to heighten the fame of Franklin. It was the era when the modern Press was beginning to assert its new-born power, and the fur cap, one of the badges of the mediæval printer, that he wore, was hardly necessary to remind the newspapers of that day, with all their facilities for rouging public reputation by artful and persistent publicity, that Franklin was first of all a printer. It was also the era when the idea of the universal brotherhood of men of all classes and races made an uncommonly strong ap-

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of Master of Arts was conferred on him in July, 1753, by Harvard College, and in September of the same year by Yale College. In April, 1756, the degree of Master of Arts was bestowed on him by William and Mary College. In 1759, he received the degree of Doctor in Laws from the University of St. Andrews, and in 1762, he was made a Doctor of Civil Laws by the University of Oxford. At various times in his life, he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, an Honorary Fellow of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, a member of the Royal Society of London, one of the eight foreign associates of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, an honorary member of the Medical Society of London, the first foreign associate of the Royal Society of Medicine at Paris, and a member of other learned societies or academies at Padua, Turin, Orleans, Madrid, Rotterdam, Göttingen and elsewhere.

peal to democratic and humanitarian impulses. Such an age could readily enough regard a man like Franklin as a true citizen of the world, a veritable friend of man and a torch-bearer of the new social and political freedom. It was also the era when it was the mode to indulge dreams of primitive beatitude and idyllic simplicity, and around no figure could such dreams more naturally gather than that of the venerable and celebrated man, whose thin white hair, worn straight without wig or powder, plain dress and frank, direct speech seemed to make him the ideal exemplar of a state of society devoid of monarch, aristocrat or hierarch.[1]

That Franklin, when he came to Paris, as the representative of a country, which was not only at war with the hereditary enemy of France, but had fearlessly avowed general political sentiments, that France herself was eager to avow, should, with his fame, simple manners and social charm, have excited for a time the surpassing enthusiasm which he did is not surprising; for what the French ardently admire they usually festoon with fireworks and crown with flowers; but that this enthusiasm should have continued, so far as we can see, wholly unabated for nine years, is a surprising thing, indeed, when

[1] "It would be difficult," says Count Ségur, "to describe the eagerness and delight with which the American envoys, the agents of a people in a state of insurrection against their monarch, were received in France, in the bosom of an ancient monarchy. Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the luxury of our capital, the elegance of our fashions, the magnificence of Versailles, the still brilliant remains of the monarchical pride of Louis XIV., and the polished and superb dignity of our nobility on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the almost rustic apparel, the plain but firm demeanor, the free and direct language of the envoys, whose antique simplicity of dress and appearance seemed to have introduced within our walls, in the midst of the effeminate and servile refinement of the eighteenth century, some sages contemporary with Plato, or republicans of the age of Cato and of Fabius. This unexpected apparition produced upon us a greater effect in consequence of its novelty, and of its occurring precisely at the period when literature and philosophy had circulated amongst us an unusual desire for reforms, a disposition to encourage innovations, and the seeds of an ardent attachment to liberty."

we recollect how inclined the fickle populace of every country is to beat in its hour of inevitable reaction the idol before which it has prostrated itself in its hour of infatuation. While in France, Franklin was not simply the mode, he was the rage. Learned men from every part of Europe thought a visit to Paris quite incomplete, if it did not include a call upon him. Even the Emperor Joseph, "a King by trade," as he once termed himself, intrigued to meet him *incognito*. Among the many letters that he received from individuals, distinguished or obscure, who sought to flatter him or to draw upon his wisdom or treasured knowledge, was Robespierre—then a young advocate at Arras— who sent him a copy of his argument in defence of the lightning rod before the Council of Artois, and Marat who, true enough to his future, was investigating the physical laws of heat and flame. In the letter to Franklin, by which the copy of his argument was accompanied, Robespierre spoke of Franklin as "a man whose least merit is to be the most illustrious *savant* of the world." To have a Franklin stove in its fireplace, with a portrait of Franklin on the wall above it, grew to be a common feature of the home of the wealthier householder in Paris. His spectacles, his marten fur cap, his brown coat, his bamboo cane became objects of general imitation. Canes and snuff-boxes were carried *à la Franklin*. Portraits, busts and medallions of him were multiplied without stint. Among the busts were some in Sèvres china, set in blue stones with gold borders, and among the medallions were innumerable ones made of clay dug at Passy.

The clay medallion of me [Franklin wrote to Sarah Bache] you say you gave to Mr. Hopkinson was the first of the kind made in France. A variety of others have been made since of different sizes; some to be set in the lids of snuff-boxes, and some so small as to be worn in rings; and the numbers sold are

incredible. These, with the pictures, busts, and prints (of which copies upon copies are spread everywhere) have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do anything that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it.

It was computed that some two hundred different kinds of representations of his face were turned out to be set in rings, watches, snuff-boxes, bracelets, looking-glasses and other chattels. One print of him is said to have made the fortune of the engraver. Particularly striking is the testimony of John Adams to the fame of Franklin when in France, which is part of the remarkable letter published by him in the *Boston Patriot* on May 11, 1811, in answer to Franklin's strictures on his conduct in France:

His reputation was more universal than that of Leibnitz or Newton, Frederick or Voltaire; and his character more beloved and esteemed than any or all of them. . . . His name was familiar to government and people, to kings, courtiers, nobility, clergy, and philosophers, as well as plebeians, to such a degree that there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen, a *valet de chambre*, coachman or footman, a lady's chambermaid, or a scullion in a kitchen, who was not familiar with it, and who did not consider him as a friend to human kind. When they spoke of him, they seemed to think he was to restore the golden age.

To the pen of Adams we are also indebted for an account of the first public meeting between Voltaire and Franklin, which also testified with such dramatic *éclat* to the place occupied by Franklin in the hearts of the French people. This was at the hall of the Academy of Science in Paris.

Voltaire and Franklin were both present, and there presently arose a general cry that M. Voltaire and M. Franklin should be introduced to each other. This was done, and they bowed and spoke to each other. This was no satisfaction;

there must be something more. Neither of our philosophers seemed to divine what was wished or expected; they, however, took each other by the hand. But this was not enough; the clamor continued, until the explanation came out. "*Il faut s'embrasser, à la Française.*" The two aged actors upon this great theatre of philosophy and frivolity then embraced each other, by hugging one another in their arms, and kissing each other's cheeks, and then the tumult subsided. And the cry immediately spread through the whole kingdom, and, I suppose, over all Europe, "*Qu'il était charmant de voir embrasser Solon et Sophocle!*"

A few weeks later Voltaire was dead, and, in the fall of the same year, his Apotheosis was celebrated by the Lodge of Nine Sisters—a Freemason's Lodge in Paris. An account of this memorable occasion was subsequently published by the officers of the Lodge. Madame Denis, the niece of Voltaire, and the Marchioness of Villette, whom he called his *Belle et Bonne*, and under whose roof he died, were present. After various addresses and strains of orchestral music, a clap of thunder was heard. Then

the sepulchral pyramid disappeared, great light succeeded the gloom which had prevailed till now, an agreeable symphony sounded in the place of the mournful music, and an immense picture of the apotheosis of Voltaire was disclosed. The picture represented Corneille, Racine and Molière above Voltaire as he leaves his tomb. Truth and Beneficence present him to them. Envy pulls at his shroud, in the wish to hold him back, but is driven away by Minerva. Higher up may be seen Fame, publishing the triumph of Voltaire.

Crowns were then laid upon the heads of La Dixmerie, the orator, Gauget, the painter, and Franklin, who lifted them from their heads and laid them at the feet of Voltaire's image.

Madame Campan in her *Memoirs* mentions another

occasion on which the most beautiful of three hundred women was designated to place a crown of laurel on Franklin's head, and to kiss him on each cheek.

Add to all these evidences of popular admiration and affection the intimate footing maintained by Franklin in so many French homes, and we begin to understand how powerfully his public and social standing helped to swell the resistless tide of sympathy and enthusiasm which bore down all opposition to the French alliance.

But far more than to his mere congeniality with the social spirit of the French People, or to his literary and scientific fame, or to his kinship with all the liberal tendencies of the eighteenth century in America and Europe, was the success of Franklin at the French court due to those general attributes of mind and character which he brought to every exigency of his private or public life: his good sense, his good feeling, his perfect equipoise, his tact, his reasonableness, his kindly humor. It was these things which, above everything else, enabled him to surmount all the trying difficulties of his situation, and to give to the world the most imposing example of fruitful pecuniary solicitation that it has ever known. The firm hold that he obtained upon the esteem and good will of Vergennes, "that just and good man" he terms him in one of his letters, was but the merited reward of personal qualities which invite, secure and retain esteem and good will under all human conditions. Vergennes, who held the keys of the French money-chest, and directed the policies of France, respected, trusted and liked Franklin, because Franklin, at any rate, duly recognized and acknowledged the generous motives which had, in part, inspired French intervention in the American contest, because he exhibited a considerate appreciation of the sacrifices which it cost France, still bleeding from her last struggle with Great Britain, to make such large and repeated loans to the United States, and because his tactful

and discreet applications for pecuniary assistance for his country were never marked by disgusting importunity or thinly veiled menaces. How true this is we have already seen; and its truth is still further confirmed by the testimony of Franklin's successor, Jefferson, who, when asked in Paris, whether he replaced Franklin, was in the habit of replying, "No one can replace him, sir; I am only his successor." After stating the circumstances, including his own association with Franklin at Paris, which had convinced him that the charge of subservience to France, made against Franklin, had not a shadow of foundation, Jefferson pays this impressive tribute to him:

> He possessed the confidence of that Government in the highest degree, insomuch, that it may truly be said, that they were more under his influence than he under theirs. The fact is, that his temper was so amiable and conciliatory, his conduct so rational, never urging impossibilities, or even things unreasonably inconvenient to them, in short, so moderate and attentive to *their* difficulties as well as our own, that what his enemies called subserviency, I saw was only that reasonable disposition, which, sensible that advantages are not all to be on one side, yielding what is just and liberal, is the more certain of obtaining liberality and justice. Mutual confidence produces, of course, mutual influence, and this was all which subsisted between Dr. Franklin and the government of France.

To Jefferson we are also indebted for the statement that, when he was in France, there appeared to him more respect and veneration attached to the character of Franklin than to that of any other person in the same country, foreign or native.

The volume of multifarious tasks performed by Franklin in France was immense. The most valuable service rendered by him to the United States was in obtaining from the French King the pecuniary aids which helped Congress to defray the expenses of the Revolutionary War.

It has been truly said that he, and not Robert Morris, was the real financier of the Revolution. Until the triumph of the patriot cause was assured, he was the only one of the American envoys in Europe whose pecuniary solicitations met with any material success. Sometimes even such sums as were obtained by others outside of France were more attributable to his indirect influence than to their own direct efforts. No matter upon whom Congress might recklessly draw drafts, they were certain to come around to the aged negotiator, who appeared to be able to secure money from France even when France had no money for herself. He might be told that a loan which he had just procured from Vergennes was positively the last that France could make, and, yet, when he was compelled by desperation at home to give another reluctant rub to his magic lamp, there always stood the French servitor with his chest of gold. The aggregate amount of the loans and gifts made by France to the United States was on February 21, 1783, little short of forty-three millions of francs. It was these loans and gifts, transformed into munitions of war and military supplies, which again and again infused reviving life into the fainting bosom of his country, and enabled her soldiers to turn an undaunted face to her foes. How a man of Franklin's years could have borne up under such frightful anxieties as those imposed upon him by the pecuniary demands of Congress and its other foreign envoys, to say nothing of additional burdens, it is difficult to understand. In the second year after his arrival in France, when drafts began to pour in on him from Congress, he reminded it that the envoys had not undertaken to do more than to honor its bills for interest on certain specified sums; and this reminder was frequently repeated. It might as well have been syllabled to the winds. Though most of the limited cargoes of tobacco and other products remitted by Congress as a basis of credit fell into the

hands of the ever-watchful British cruisers, almost every ship brought over bills upon the envoys or large orders for clothing, arms and ammunition. At one time, they had notice that bills for interest had been drawn on them to the amount of two millions and a half, when they did not have a fifth of that sum on deposit with their banker. In a letter to the Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1779, Franklin, who was really our sole envoy for the purpose of paying such bills, enumerates the great quantities of clothing, arms, ammunition and naval stores, which the envoys had sent over to America, the heavy drafts paid by them that Congress had drawn in favor of officers returning to France, or of other persons, the outlays of the envoys for the benefit of American prisoners, the amounts advanced by them to other agents of the United States, the freight charges paid by them and the sums expended by them in fitting out Captain Conygham and the *Raleigh*, *Alfred*, *Boston*, *Providence*, *Alliance*, *Ranger* and other frigates. "And now," he concluded, "the Drafts of the Treasurer of the Loans coming very fast upon me, the Anxiety I have suffered, and the Distress of Mind lest I should not be able to pay them, has for a long time been very great indeed." This was but one of the earlier crises in the financial experience which led Franklin to say that his seemed to be the Gibeonite task of drawing water for all the congregation of Israel. The point of the observation becomes still more manifest when the reader is told that drafts were also frequently drawn on Franklin by the European agents of the Committee of Commerce of Congress, and that even the foreign agents of individual States of the Union, finding that no American abroad but he seemed to have any credit, applied to him for assistance in effecting loans for their principals. Indeed, one agent of the United States, a Mr. Bingham, did not scruple, without authority from Congress, or any other source, to notify Franklin that the *Deane* and the *General*

Gates had just arrived at Martinique and were in need of overhauling and provisions, and that he would have to draw upon him for the expense. This was too much even for Franklin's patience, and, when Mr. Bingham's bills were returned protested, that gentleman loudly complained that his credit had been effectually ruined. And, as the necessities of Congress became greater and greater, it almost wholly ceased to recognize that there were any limitations upon its right to draw upon Franklin, or that there was even any reason why it should notify him that such drafts were drawn. It simply drew, hit or miss. For pursuing this course in regard to him, there was at least the excuse that, no matter how freely it drew upon him, he somehow contrived to preserve the credit of Congress unstained. But Congress had no such excuse for drawing bills in this reckless manner, as it did too often, upon John Jay, Henry Laurens or John Adams. It is a laughable fact that, when some of its bills drawn upon Henry Laurens reached Europe, the drawee, who had never arrived in Holland, the country to which he was accredited, at all, was a prisoner in the Tower. As none of the other envoys, upon whom Congress drew, had any resource but to beg Franklin to pay the drafts, these drafts might as well have been drawn upon him in the first instance. No wonder that, with this accumulation of responsibility upon his shoulders, Franklin should have written to John Jay in Spain in these terms:

> But the little Success that has attended your late applications for money mortified me exceedingly; and the Storm of Bills, which I found coming upon us both has terrified and vexed me to such a Degree, that I have been deprived of Sleep, and so much indispos'd by continual anxiety, as to be render'd almost incapable of writing.

This very letter, however, bears witness to his remarkable aptitude for dunning without incurring its odious

penalties. Overcoming his almost invincible reluctance, he said, he had made another application to the French Court for more money, and had been told to make himself easy as he would be assisted with what was necessary. Indeed, so generous was its conduct on this occasion that, when Franklin, in part payment for the loan, proposed that Congress should provision the French army in America with produce demanded from the States, his Majesty declined the proposal, saying that to furnish his army with such a large quantity of provisions as it needed might straiten Congress. "You will not wonder at my loving this good prince," Franklin concluded.

Amid all the cruel embarrassments of his situation, however, he never abated one jot of heart or hope, nor for one moment lost sight of the imperial future which he so clearly foresaw for the country that was adding sixty thousand children to her numbers annually. In this same letter, he let Jay know that in his opinion no amount of present distress should induce the United States to make the concessions to Spain that she was disposed to hold out as the price of her assistance. "Poor as we are," his indomitable spirit declared, "yet, as I know we shall be rich, I would rather agree with them to buy at a great Price the whole of their Right on the Mississippi, than sell a Drop of its waters. A Neighbour might as well ask me to sell my Street Door." Loyal, too, to Congress he remained from first to last. The worst that he was willing to say in a letter to Thomas Ruston of its rash conduct in flooding the world with bills that for all it knew might never be paid was a quiet, "That body Is, as you suppose, not well skill'd in Financing."

Less than two months after his letter to Jay, we find him again appealing to Vergennes for pecuniary aid with which to enable Congress to co-operate with the French forces in America, and, a few weeks later, when the vitality of the American cause was at its lowest point,

he again takes up, on fresh calls from Congress, the same tedious refrain. The letter written by him to Vergennes on this occasion is one of his supplicatory masterpieces. He lays before the French Minister evidence that the spirit of the United States is unbroken, and that the recent success of the British in Carolina was chiefly due to the lack of the necessary means for "furnishing, marching, and paying the Expence of Troops sufficient to defend that Province." He tells him that Lafayette had written that it was impossible to conceive, without seeing it, the distress that the troops had suffered for want of clothing; and that Washington, too, had written to him that the situation of the United States made one of two things essential to them, a peace, or the most vigorous aid of their allies, particularly in the article of money. For the aid, so necessary in the present conjuncture, he said, they could rely on France alone, and the continuance of the King's goodness towards them. And then he concluded with these affecting but not altogether artless words:

I am grown old. I feel myself much enfeebled by my late long Illness, and it is probable I shall not long have any more Concern in these Affairs. I therefore take this Occasion to express my Opinion to your Excellency, that the present Conjuncture is critical; that there is some Danger lest the Congress should lose its Influence over the people, if it is found unable to procure the Aids that are wanted; and that the whole System of the New Governt in America may thereby be shaken; that, if the English are suffer'd once to recover that Country, such an Opportunity of effectual Separation as the present may not occur again in the Course of Ages; and that the Possession of those fertile and extensive Regions, and that vast Sea Coast, will afford them so Broad a Basis for future Greatness, by the rapid growth of their Commerce, and Breed of Seamen and Soldiers, as will enable them to become the *Terror of Europe*, and to exercise with impunity that Insolence, which is so natural to their Nation, and

which will increase enormously with the Increase of their Power.

Hard upon the heels of this letter came a letter from John Adams, inquiring whether Franklin could furnish funds for paying bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds sterling which had been drawn by Congress on Adams. Franklin replied by saying that he had not yet received a positive answer to his last appeal for aid to the French King, but that he had, however, two of the Christian Graces, Faith and Hope, though his faith was only that of which the Apostle speaks—the evidence of things not seen. In truth, he declared, he did not see at that time how so many bills drawn at random on the Ministers of Congress in France, Spain and Holland were to be paid. But all bills drawn upon them by Congress should be accepted at any risk; and he would accordingly do his best, and, if those endeavors failed, he was ready to break, run away or go to prison with Adams, as it should please God. His endeavors were successful, so startlingly successful that Vergennes informed him that his Majesty, to give the States a signal proof of his friendship, had resolved to grant them the sum of six millions, not as a loan, but as a free gift. But the announcement was accompanied by the significant statement that, as the supplies previously purchased in France by the United States, were supposed to be of bad quality, the Ministers would themselves take care of the purchase, with part of the gift, of such articles as were urgently needed in America, and the balance, remaining after these purchases, was to be drawn for by General Washington upon M. d'Harvelay, Garde du Trèsor Royal. "There was no room to dispute on this point," Franklin wrote to Samuel Huntington, "every donor having the right of qualifying his gifts with such terms as he thinks proper"; but the restrictions upon the gift would

seem, after all, to have been waived. Shortly after the six millions was promised, Colonel Laurens, who was supposed by Washington to be peculiarly competent to state the needs of the American army, arrived in France, and to him Franklin delegated the task of making purchases for Congress with part of the sum. Franklin was already supporting Adams, Dana, Jay and Carmichael on the proceeds of his persuasive approaches to the French King, and, at best, the arrival of Laurens would have meant little except another ministerial mouth to feed. Unfortunately, however, it signified much more to Franklin's peace. Before returning to America, with two millions and a half of the six millions, Laurens made such free use of the remainder that Franklin, unable to meet bills, with which he was threatened, was compelled to write to Adams not to accept any more bills that were expected to be paid by him without notice to him, and to Jay that, if the bills drawn upon him some months before could not be paid by him, they would have to go to protest. "For," Franklin said, "it will not be in my Power to help you. And I see that nothing will cure the Congress of this Madness of Drawing upon the Pump at Aldgate, but such a Proof that its Well has a Bottom."

To make things worse, though Congress continued to draw bills upon Franklin after the gift of the six millions, it deprived him of the ability to use that fund by forbidding any portion of it to be used without its order. Franklin by prompt action did succeed in intercepting a part of the six millions, which Laurens had taken to Holland, and which was about to follow him to America. Speaking of this in a letter to William Jackson, who had come over with Laurens, and was very angry with Franklin for detaining the amount, Franklin wrote, "I see, that nobody cares how much I am distressed, provided they can carry their own Points. I must, therefore, take what care I can of mine, theirs and mine being equally intended

for the Service of the Public." It would have been well for Jackson if he had let the matter rest there, but he did not, and had the temerity to write to Franklin a saucy letter to which he replied in these terms:

> These Superior Airs you give yourself, young Gentleman, of Reproof to me, and Reminding me of my Duty do not become you, whose special Department and Employ in Public Affairs, of which you are so vain, is but of yesterday, and would never have existed but by my Concurrence, and would have ended in Disgrace if I had not supported your enormous Purchases by accepting your Drafts. The charging me with want of oeconomy is particularly improper in *you*, when the only Instance you know of it is my having indiscreetly comply'd with your Demand in advancing you 120 Louis for the Expence of your Journey to Paris and when the only Instance I know of your oeconomizing Money is your sending me three Expresses, one after another, on the same Day, all the way from Holland to Paris, each with a Letter saying the same thing to the same purpose.

One of the transactions, mentioned in this correspondence, is a good illustration of the pecuniary "afterclaps," to use Franklin's term, to which Franklin was frequently subjected. He had agreed to pay for goods for the United States to the amount of fifteen thousand pounds. Instead of the purchases amounting to fifteen thousand pounds, they amounted to fifty thousand, and he persistently refused to pay for them. Jackson then hurried express to him, urged that the goods were bought by order of Colonel Laurens, that they were on shipboard, and that, if Franklin did not pay for them, they would have to be relanded and returned, or sold; which would be a disgrace, he insisted, to the United States. In the end, Franklin accepted the bills for the whole amount, and applied to the French Ministry for the money with which to pay for them. The application was a particularly

disagreeable one to him, not only because all the fiscal calculations of the French Government for the year had been completed, but because no part of the purchase price of the goods would be expended in France. At first, the grant was absolutely refused, but at length Franklin obtained it, and hoped that the difficulty was over. It was not. Afterwards, the officers of the ship decided that she was overloaded, and the goods were transferred to two other ships, whose owners required Franklin either to buy the ships, or to pay them a freight bill nearly equal to the value of the ships. This whole transaction was bad enough, but William Jackson at least had the grace to notify Franklin that the bills in this instance were about to descend upon him before their descent. This, we know from a mildly reproachful letter, written by Franklin to John Paul Jones, a Mr. Moylan was not kind enough to do when he drew upon Franklin for nearly one hundred thousand livres for supplies ordered by Jones for the *Ariel*.

These are but typical instances of the financial complications in which Franklin was involved from time to time while he was drawing water for all the congregation of Israel. Long after their date, bills were still making his life miserable.

> This serves chiefly to acquaint you [he wrote on one occasion to John Adams] that I will endeavour to pay the Bills that have been presented to you drawn on Mr. Laurens. But you terrify me, by acquainting me that there are yet a great number behind. It is hard that I never had any information sent me of the Sums drawn, a Line of Order to pay, nor a Syllable of Approbation for having paid any of the Bills drawn on Mr. Laurens, Mr. Jay or yourself.

To John Jay about the same time he wrote, "The cursed Bills, as you justly term them, do us infinite Prejudice." In a letter to John Adams, he speaks of "the dreaded

Drafts." At times it looked as if the stream of French bounty was at last exhausted. "With the million mentioned," he wrote to John Adams in substantially the same terms as he had written to Robert Morris two days before, "I can continue paying to the end of February, and then, if I get no more I must shut up shop." This was in January, 1782, when France, in addition to assisting the United States with a fleet and army, had advanced great additional sums to them since the beginning of the preceding year. At this time, for very shame Franklin could scarcely pluck up courage enough to make another pecuniary application to the French Ministry. In giving in a letter to John Jay his reasons for not holding out the hope of pecuniary relief to him, he said, "I had weary'd this friendly & generous Court with often repeated afterclap Demands, occasioned by these unadvised (as well as ill advis'd) & therefore unexpected Drafts, and was ashamed to show my Face to the Minister." In the same letter, Franklin also said: "We have been assisted with near 20 Millions since the Beginning of last Year, besides a Fleet and Army; and yet I am oblig'd to worry [them] with my Sollicitations for more, which makes us appear insatiable."

But the most interesting passage in this letter is the following: "You mention my Proposing to repay the Sum you want in America. I had try'd that last year. I drew a Bill on Congress for a considerable Sum to be advanced me here, and paid in provisions for the French Troops. My Bill was not honoured!" Worst of all, when Bills from Congress still showered upon him, after its promise that no more bills would be drawn on him subsequent to a fixed date, he began to suspect that the drawing was still going on, and that the bills were antedated. To no American was the heedless reliance of Congress upon the generosity of France more mortifying than to him. He repeatedly suggested the obligation of

his own country to look more to self-help and less to the aid of her friendly and generous ally, and, at times, in his characteristic way, he would demonstrate arithmetically how easy it would be for the United States to support the burden of the war themselves if they would only keep down the spirit of luxury and extravagance at home, and cease to buy so many foreign gewgaws and superfluities and so much tea. "In my opinion, the surest way to obtain liberal aid from others is vigorously to help ourselves," he wrote to Robert R. Livingston. "It is absurd," he said later in another letter to Robert Morris, "the pretending to be lovers of liberty while they (the American people) grudge paying for the defence of it." He was generously prompt always also to ascribe any temporary interruption to the flow of French subsidy to the pressing necessities of France herself. Full, too, always he was of simple-hearted gratitude to France for the princely help that she had given to the American cause. No one knew better than he that this help originated partly in selfish policy, and was continued partly because it had been extended too liberally already to be easily discontinued. "Those, who have begun to assist us," he shrewdly observed to Jay, when counselling him that every first favor obtained from Spain was *tant de gagné*, "are more likely to continue than to decline." Every appeal that he ever made in his life to liberality in any form took the bias of self-interest duly into account. But he was merely true to his settled principle that human character is an amalgam of both unselfish and selfish motives, when, realizing that the aid rendered by France to the United States originated partly in the glow of a generous enthusiasm for the cause of human liberty and fraternity, he wrote to Robert R. Livingston on August 12, 1782, a letter in which, after stating that the whole amount of the indebtedness, then due by the United States to France, amounted to eighteen million livres, exclusive

of the Holland loan guaranteed by the King of France, he said:

In reading it [a statement of the account] you will discover several fresh marks of the King's goodness towards us, amounting to the value of near two millions. These, added to the free gifts before made to us at different times, form an object of at least twelve millions, for which no returns but that of gratitude and friendship are expected. These, I hope, may be everlasting.

In a subsequent letter to Vergennes, Franklin referred to the King as our "Friend and Father." But naturally enough deep-seated gratitude found its most impressive utterance when the long and bloody war was at an end, the independence of the United States fully established and Franklin ready, as he wrote to Robert R. Livingston, to say with old Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

May I beg the favour of you, Sir [he wrote to Vergennes, when he was soon to leave France forever], to express respectfully for me to his Majesty, the deep Sense I have of all the inestimable Benefits his Goodness has conferr'd on my Country; a Sentiment that it will be the Business of the little Remainder of Life now left me, to impress equally on the Minds of all my Countrymen. My sincere Prayers are, that God may shower down his Blessings on the King, the Queen, their children, and all the royal Family to the latest Generations!

It would be irksome to detail all the loans obtained by Franklin from the French King, and all the terrifying drafts drawn upon him. Profuse from first to last as were the bills, which he was called upon to pay, he appears to have met them all, with a few exceptions, whether drawn upon Adams, Jay, Laurens or himself. Nor, when an extortioner attempted to perpetrate an outrage upon the United States, did he fail to oppose him with a wit quite as

keen as his and with a spirit far more resolute. Such a skinflint seems to have been De Neufville, of Amsterdam, who offered on one occasion to borrow money for the United States, provided that their representatives hypothecated to his firm, in the name of the whole Congress of the Thirteen United States, as security for the loan, all the lands, cities, territories and possessions of the said Thirteen States, present or prospective. After mercilessly analyzing in a letter to John Adams the unconscionable covenants by which this tremendous hypothecation was to be accompanied, Franklin ended with these observations:

> By this time, I fancy, your Excellency is satisfy'd, that I was wrong in supposing J. de Neufville as much a Jew as any in Jerusalem (a reference to what he had said in a former letter) since Jacob was not content with any per cents, but took the whole of his Brother Esau's Birthright, & his Posterity did the same by the Cananites, & cut their Throats into the Bargain; which, in my Conscience, I do not think M. J. de Neufville has the least Inclination to do by us,—while he can get anything by our being alive.

The immediate occasion for this letter was the refusal of De Neufville to allow the goods which had bred trouble between Franklin and William Jackson to be delivered to the agents of the United States until a claim for damages that he had preferred against the United States was satisfied. "We have, you observe" Franklin had written in an earlier letter to John Adams, "our Hands in the Lyon's Mouth; but if Mr. N. is a Lyon, I am a Bear, and I think I can hug & gripe him till he lets go our Hands." And he was as good as his word, and let De Neufville know that, if he did not deliver the goods, the bills drawn by him on Franklin for the price, though accepted, would not be paid. A few days later, in another letter to Adams with respect to the same matter, Franklin said in regard to a

proposal of settlement made by De Neufville, "I think that the less we have to do with that Shark the better; his jaws are too strong, his teeth too many and his appetite immensely voracious." Before the episode was ended, De Neufville was only too glad to dispatch his son to Paris to beseech the bear to relax his hug.

There was still another reason why the arrival of bills from America should be feared by Franklin. They were drawn in three sets each, and there was constant danger, as the sets came in at different times, of the same bill being paid more than once. In fact, repeated efforts were fraudulently made to palm off duplicates and triplicates as firsts upon Franklin. To shut off frauds, the minutest inspection of the bills, as they were presented for payment, was indispensable, and, for this task, Franklin, Congress having wholly ignored his request for a secretary, had no one to help him but Temple and the French clerk at fifty louis a year. The task was rendered especially laborious by the fact that a host of the bills was drawn by Congress in very small amounts for the payment of interest abroad.

Far less tedious, of course, but still burdensome enough, was the labor of copying the dispatches that left Franklin's hands. At one time, the Atlantic was so alive with British cruisers that a dispatch on its way to Congress from France had almost as little chance of escape as a jettisoned dog in a shark-infested sea.

> Adams [stated one of the letters in 1777 of our envoys in France], by whom we wrote early this summer, was taken on this coast, having sunk his dispatches. We hear that Hammond shared the same fate on your coast. Johnson, by whom we wrote in September, was taken going out of the channel, and poor Captain Wickes (of the *Reprisal*) who sailed at the same time, and had duplicates, we just now hear foundered near Newfoundland, every man perishing but the cook.

It was a batch of papers tossed into the ocean, and snatched up by a nimble British sailor, before they sank,

that first apprised the British Ministry of the treaty for an alliance hatching between Holland and the United States, and led Great Britain to declare war promptly against Holland. With such perilous conditions to face, Franklin's dispatches were sometimes copied as often as seven times. Besides the copy retained by him, and the copy sent to Congress, other copies were later sent to Congress by the next ships leaving France for the United States.

Another most onerous function imposed upon Franklin, until the appointment of Thomas Barclay, a merchant, as Consul-General to France, was that of purchasing supplies for Congress and fitting out ships. Special provision for this function should, of course, have been made by Congress, so as to leave him free to give his attention to what he termed his political duties, but it was not until after he had repeatedly begged Congress to relieve him from it that Congress first appointed for that purpose Colonel Palfrey, who was lost at sea, on his way over to France, and then Barclay. In the meantime, Franklin had suffered infinite annoyance in the performance of duties for which he had no time, and insisted that he had no knowledge or training. Writing to Jonathan Williams about the dispatch of certain goods to America, he said:

> At this Distance from the Ports, and unacquainted as I am with such Affairs, I know not what to advise about getting either that Cloathing or the small Arms and Powder at L'Orient or the Cloth of Mr. Ross transported to America; and yet everybody writes to me for Orders, or Advice, or Opinion, or Approbation, which is like calling upon a blind Man to judge of Colours.

Writing later to Williams about the same matter, when it had assumed a still more vexatious aspect, he peremptorily turned down a project laid before him by Williams, saying with an ebullition of impatience quite unlike the ordinary tenor of his even temper, "I have been too

long in hot Water, plagu'd almost to Death with the Passions, Vagaries, and ill Humours and Madnesses of other People. I must have a little Repose."

Another office performed by Franklin, though no special commission for the purpose was ever issued to him by Congress, was that of a Judge in Admiralty. A large quantity of blank commissions for privateers having been sent to him by Congress shortly after his arrival in France, he delivered them to cruisers, fitted out in the ports of France, and manned by smugglers, who knew every creek and cove on the English coast which they had so often visited by night as well, to use a simile employed by one of Franklin's correspondents, as they knew the corners of their beds. The alarm and loss created by these privateers was no mean offset to the destructive efficiency of the British cruisers. One privateer, the *Black Prince*, took in the course of three months more than thirty sail. Such was the apprehension excited by the depredations of American privateers that the seacoasts of England were kept in a constant state of panic, and the premium rate on marine insurance was largely enhanced. As prizes were brought into French harbors, the papers seized in them were examined by Franklin for the purpose of passing upon their legality and the liability of the prizes to sale. It was also under the patronage of Franklin and Deane that the *Reprisal*, the first American ship to fire a gun or capture a prize in European waters, the *Lexington*, a sloop-of-war, of fourteen guns, fitted out by Congress, and commanded by Captain Johnson, the *Dolphin*, a cutter of ten guns, purchased by our envoys from M. de Chaumont, and the *Surprise*, a cutter, commanded by the doughty Captain Gustavus Conyngham, inflicted such injury upon English commerce, including the capture of the Lisbon packet by Captain Wickes, that the French Ministry was compelled to heed the remonstrances of Lord Stormont, the English Minister, so far as to make

a deceitful show, in one form or another, of vindicating the outraged neutrality of France. But, when the flimsiest ruses were allowed by the French Ministry to circumvent its interdiction of the abuse of its ports by American ships, with prizes in tow, and Captain Conyngham and his crew, after passing a few days in luxury in a French prison, found means in some unaccountable manner to escape, just as two English men-of-war were coming over to ask that they be delivered to them as pirates, there was little fear anywhere along the French coast, or in the breasts of our envoys, that any sternly vigorous embargo was likely to be laid upon the privateering activities of the United States by anything except the naval energy of England itself.

At this time, Franklin was eager to retaliate the destruction and suffering wantonly inflicted upon some of the defenceless seacoast towns of America by the British. He, therefore, advised Congress to put three frigates into the very best fighting trim, and to send them, loaded with tobacco, as if they were common merchantmen, to Nantes or Bordeaux, but with instructions, when they reached the one or the other port, to make off suddenly for some unsuspecting British port, pounce upon the vessels in its harbor, levy contributions, burn, plunder and get away before any harm could be done to them by a counterstroke.

> The burning or plundering of Liverpool or Glasgow [he said] would do us more essential service than a million of treasure and much blood spent on the continent. It would raise our reputation to the highest pitch, and lessen in the same degree that of the enemy. We are confident it is practicable, and with very little danger.

In a letter to Lafayette, too, Franklin stated that the coasts of England and Scotland were extremely open and defenceless, and that there were many rich towns in those

countries near the sea "which 4 or 5000 Men, landing unexpectedly, might easily surprize and destroy, or exact from them a heavy Contribution taking a part in ready Money and Hostages for the rest." He even calculated in livres the amounts that might be demanded of Bristol, Bath, Liverpool, Lancaster and other English towns.

But the most eventful thing that Franklin ever did in relation to American activity on the sea was to invite John Paul Jones to take command of a fine frigate that the envoys had ordered from Holland, but had been compelled by the vigilance of Great Britain to turn over to France, when but partially built. While at Brest, Jones received a confidential note from Franklin telling him that the King had asked the loan of him to the French navy for a while, and wished him to take command of the frigate. "She is at present," he said, "the property of the King; but, as there is no war yet declared, you will have the commission and flag of the United States, and act under their orders and laws." The frigate, however, was far from being completed, and the thought of a stranger being placed in command of her was highly irritating to French naval officers with a mind to promotion. Chafing under the delay and uncertainty, occasioned by these circumstances, Jones, whose remarkable literary facility, despite his lack of education, is at least one illustration of the truth of Dogberry's saying that reading and writing come by nature, wrote impatient appeals to the French Minister, Franklin, the members of the Royal Family and the King himself.

While in this humor, his eye happened to fall upon a maxim in one of Poor Richard's Almanacs, "If you would have your business done, go; if not, send." He heeded the suggestion, proceeded to Versailles and secured an order for the purchase of the forty-gun ship, which, in honor of his monitor, he called the *Bon Homme Richard*. What she did, old as she was, with her heroic commander,

and her medley crew of Americans, Irish, English, Scotch, French, Portuguese, Maltese and Malay sailors, before she relaxed her dying clutch upon the *Serapis*, and sank, immortalized by a splendid victory, to the bottom of the ocean, there is no need for the biographer of Franklin to tell. It is enough to say that for Franklin Jones ever entertained a feeling little short of passionate reverence. "The letter which I had the honor to receive from your Excellency to-day . . . would make a coward brave," was his reply to one of Franklin's wise and humane letters of instruction. This letter is evidence enough that Franklin was not so incensed by the ruthless conduct at times of the British in America as to be lost to the clemency of his own abstract views about the proper limits of warfare.

> Altho' [he said] the English have wantonly burnt many defenceless Towns in America, you are not to follow this Example, unless where a Reasonable Ransom is refused; in which Case, your own generous feelings, as well as this Instruction, will induce you to give timely Notice of your Intention, that sick and ancient Persons, Women and Children, may be first removed.

The relief of American prisoners in England was another thing which continually taxed the attention of Franklin during the Revolutionary War. "I was sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not," was a reproach that no one of them could justly address to him. His nature was a truly compassionate one, and, in few respects, does it show to greater advantage than in his unceasing efforts to secure the exchange of his unhappy countrymen, confined at Portsmouth and Plymouth, or, that failing, to provide them with all the pecuniary succor in his power, in addition to that so generously extended to them by many kind hearts in England.[1] In his friend,

[1] Compassion, it must be confessed, was not the only motive that made Franklin so eager to secure the freedom of his imprisoned countrymen.

David Hartley, a man, whose peaceful and humane instincts even the vilest passions of war could not efface, he had an agent in a position to reach the ear of the English Ministry for the purpose of promoting the exchange of prisoners. For different reasons, the task was a painfully slow one. In the beginning, all American prisoners were committed to prison upon the charge of high treason, a charge entirely inconsistent with the idea of exchange. Besides, England was reluctant to relinquish the advantage that she had, until the treaty of alliance between France and America was consummated, in the fact that American ships had nowhere to confine their prisoners except under their own hatches. They tried to meet this difficulty by releasing English prisoners on parole on their each promising that they would secure the release of an American prisoner, but the English Admiralty, after some hesitation, finally refused to surrender a single American prisoner in exchange for such paroled Englishmen. Commenting upon this fact, along with another incident, Franklin wrote to James Lovell, "There is no gaining anything upon these Barbarians by Advances of Civility or Humanity." At last, however, several cartels were agreed upon, and he enjoyed the great happiness of seeing some hundred or so American captives brought over to France and released. He was still, however, to incur a great disappointment when, owing to the fear on the part of Holland of provoking English resentment, the five hundred prisoners, transferred to Holland by John Paul Jones, after his engagement with the *Serapis*, had to be exchanged for French instead of American prisoners. The French Ministry promised to make this disappointment good by advancing to Franklin an equal number of English prisoners taken by French ships, but the English

"If we once had our Prisoners from England," he wrote to M. de Sartine on Feb. 13, 1780, "several other privateers would immediately be manned with them."

Ministry promptly met this promise by refusing to exchange American prisoners for any English prisoners except such as had been captured by American ships. It was also a great disappointment to Franklin that he could not induce the English Ministry to give its assent to a formal proposition from him that prisoners, taken by either country, should be immediately released upon the understanding that an equal number of prisoners held by the other should also be released. The high-minded conduct of Hartley, inspired in part by the hope that lenient treatment of American prisoners might help to re-unite the two countries, was all the more admirable, when contrasted with the harsh words, in which Franklin sometimes in his letters to him inveighed against the English King, Parliament and People. It is inconceivable that even Hartley would not have gradually wearied of well-doing, if his perfect knowledge of Franklin's benevolent nature had not taught him how to make liberal allowances for his friend's occasional gusts of indignation.

This indignation was usually visited upon the English King and Ministry, but upon one occasion it was visited upon the English people as well.

It is now impossible [he wrote to Hartley] to persuade our people, as I long endeavoured, that the war was merely ministerial, and that the nation bore still a good will to us. The infinite number of addresses printed in your gazettes, all approving this conduct of your government towards us, and encouraging our destruction by every possible means, the great majority in Parliament constantly manifesting the same sentiments, and the popular public rejoicings on occasion of any news of the slaughter of an innocent and virtuous people, fighting only in defence of their just rights; these, together with the recommendations of the same measures by even your celebrated moralists and divines, in their writings and sermons, that are cited approved and applauded in your great national assemblies; all join in convincing us, that you are no

longer the magnanimous and enlightened nation, we once esteemed you, and that you are unfit and unworthy to govern us, as not being able to govern your own passions.

Indeed, in this letter Franklin even told Hartley that, if the resentment of the English people did not speedily fall on their ministry, the future inhabitants of America would detest the name of Englishman as much as the children in Holland did those of Alva and Spaniard. But, scold as he might England and her rulers, he deeply appreciated the magnanimity of the good man, who even took pains to see that sums placed in his hands by Franklin were duly applied to the relief of the prisoners for whose liberty he strove so disinterestedly. Referring in one of his letters to Hartley to two little bills of exchange that he had sent to him for this purpose, he said, "Permit me to repeat my thankful Acknowledgments for the very humane and kind part you have acted in this Affair. If I thought it necessary I would pray God to bless you for it. But I know he will do it without my Prayers."

Correspondingly stern was the rebuke of Franklin for the heartless knave, Thomas Digges, equal even to the theft of an obolus placed upon the closed eyelids of a dead man as the price of his ferriage across the Styx—who drew upon Franklin in midwinter for four hundred and ninety-five pounds sterling for the relief of the American prisoners, and converted all but about thirty pounds of the sum to his own personal use. "We have no Name in our Language," said Franklin in a letter to William Hodgson, "for such atrocious Wickedness. If such a Fellow is not damn'd, it is not worth while to keep a Devil."

Besides Hartley, to say nothing of this William Hodgson, a merchant, who performed offices for Franklin similar to those of Hartley, there was another Englishman whose humanity with regard to American prisoners elicited the grateful acknowledgments of Franklin. This was Thomas

Wren, a Presbyterian minister at Portsmouth, who was untiring in soliciting contributions from his Christian brethren in England, and applying the sums thus obtained by him, as well as the weekly allowances sent to him by Franklin, to the wants of American prisoners in Forton Prison. "I think some public Notice," Franklin wrote to Robert R. Livingston, "should be taken of this good Man. I wish the Congress would enable me to make him a Present, and that some of our Universities would confer upon him the Degree of Doctor." The suggestion bore fruit, Congress sent Wren a vote of thanks, and the degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him by Princeton College. He, too, did not need the prayers of Franklin to receive the blessings reserved for the few rare spirits who can hear the voice of the God of Mercy even above the tumult of his battling children.

There were many other engrossing claims of a public or quasi-public nature upon Franklin's attention in France. In the earlier stages of the Revolutionary War, he was fairly besieged by foreign officers eager to share in its peril and glory. Several of those recommended by him to Congress—such as Steuben—gave a good account of themselves in America, but the number of those, who had no special title to his recommendation, was so great, that his ingenuity and sense of humor were severely strained to evade them or laugh them off.

You can have no Conception [he wrote to a friend] how I am harass'd. All my Friends are sought out and teiz'd to teize me. Great officers of all Ranks, in all Departments; Ladies, great and small, besides professed Sollicitors, worry me from Morning to Night. The Noise of every Coach now that enters my Court terrifies me. I am afraid to accept an Invitation to dine abroad, being almost sure of meeting with some Officer or Officer's Friend, who, as soon as I am put in a good Humour by a Glass or two of Champaign, begins his Attack upon me. Luckily I do not often in my sleep dream myself in these

vexatious Situations, or I should be afraid of what are now my only Hours of Comfort. If, therefore, you have the least remaining Kindness for me, if you would not help to drive me out of France, for God's sake, my dear friend, let this your 23rd Application be your last.

The friend to whom this letter was written was a Frenchman, and the lecture that Franklin read to him in it on the easy-going habits of his countrymen in giving recommendations is also worthy of quotation:

Permit me to mention to you [he said] that, in my Opinion, the natural complaisance of this country often carries People too far in the Article of *Recommendations*. You give them with too much Facility to Persons of whose real Characters you know nothing, and sometimes at the request of others of whom you know as little. Frequently, if a man has no useful Talents, is good for nothing and burdensome to his Relations, or is indiscreet, Profligate, and extravagant, they are glad to get rid of him by sending him to the other end of the World; and for that purpose scruple not to recommend him to those that they wish should recommend him to others, as "*un bon sujet, plein de mérite,*" &c. &c. In consequence of my crediting such Recommendations, my own are out of Credit, and I can not advise anybody to have the least Dependence on them. If, after knowing this, you persist in desiring my Recommendation for this Person, who is known neither to *me* nor to *you*, I will give it, tho', as I said before, I ought to refuse it.

The subject was one that repeatedly awakened his humorous instincts.

You can have no conception of the Arts and Interest made use of to recommend and engage us to recommend very indifferent persons [he wrote to James Lovell]. The importunity is boundless. The Numbers we refuse incredible: which if you knew you would applaud us for, and on that Account

excuse the few we have been prevail'd on to introduce to you. But, as somebody says,

> "Poets lose half the Praise they would have got,
> Were it but known what they discreetly blot."

The extent to which Silas Deane yielded to the solicitations of eager candidates abroad for military honor was one of the things that helped to destroy his standing with Congress. A second letter was written by Franklin to Lovell in which he had a word of extenuation for Deane's weakness in this respect.

I, who am upon the spot [he said] and know the infinite Difficulty of resisting the powerful Solicitations here of great Men, who if disoblig'd might have it in their Power to obstruct the Supplies he was then obtaining, do not wonder, that, being a Stranger to the People, and unacquainted with the Language, he was at first prevail'd on to make some such Agreements, when all were recommended, as they always are, as *officiers expérimentés, braves comme leurs épées, pleins de Courage, de Talents, et de Zèle pour notre Cause*, &c. &c. in short, mere Cesars, each of whom would have been an invaluable Acquisition to America.

Franklin even had the temerity to draft this *jeu d'esprit* to suit the character of the more extreme class of applications made to him for military employment, and it was actually used at times according to William Temple Franklin.

The bearer of this, who is going to America, presses me to give him a Letter of Recommendation, tho' I know nothing of him, not even his Name. This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here. Sometimes, indeed one unknown Person brings another equally unknown, to recommend him; and sometimes they recommend one another! As to this Gentleman, I must refer you to himself for his Character and Merits, with which he is certainly better acquainted

than I can possibly be. I recommend him however to those Civilities, which every Stranger, of whom one knows no Harm, has a Right to; and I request you will do him all the good Offices, and show him all the Favour that, on further Acquaintance, you shall find him to deserve.

An ill-balanced man might have fretted himself into an angry outbreak or a state of physical decline under the exasperation of such importunities, but none of the petty annoyances of Franklin's position were too rough to withstand the smoothing effect of his unctuous humor. It was like the oil that he was in the habit of carrying around with him in the hollow joint of a bamboo cane during the period of his life when he was testing the tranquillizing effect of oil upon ruffled water.

At times, however, the unreasonableness of some of the applicants was too much even for Rabelais in his easy chair.

First [he wrote to a M. Lith], you desired to have Means procur'd for you of taking a Voyage to America "*avec sureté*"; which is not possible, as the Dangers of the Sea subsist always, and at present there is the additional Danger of being taken by the English. Then you desire that this may be *sans trop grandes Dépenses*, which is not intelligible enough to be answer'd, because, not knowing your Ability of bearing expences, one can not judge what may be *trop grandes*. Lastly, you desire Letters of Address to the Congress and to General Washington; which it is not reasonable to ask of one who knows no more of you, than that your name is Lith, and that you live at Bayreuth.

Another applicant, who thirsted for military renown, was one, Louis Givanetti Pellion, "ci-devant Garde du Corps de S. M. le Roi de Sardaigne, aujourd'hui Controlleur de la Cour de S. M^e^ susdite." "I know how," this gentleman wrote, "to accommodate myself to all climates, manners, circumstances, and times. I am pas-

sionately fond of travel, I love to see the great world, its armies and navies. Neither cards, nor wine nor women have any influence over me; but a ship, an army, long voyages, all these are Paradise to me."

It was also Franklin's lot to receive many letters of inquiry about the New World from individuals in Europe, who were thinking of migrating to America for peaceable purposes. What of its climate, its trade, its people, its laws? These were some of the questions relating to the New Eldorado which these individuals wished answered. To all who questioned him about the opportunities held out by America, when he did not simply refer the questioners to Crèvecœur's "Letters from an American Farmer," his answers were substantially the same. The emigrants to America would find a good climate, good air, good soil, good government, good laws and liberty there, but no Lotus Land. One Reuben Harvey wrote to him from Cork that about one hundred poor Irish tradesmen and husbandmen desired to settle in America. Franklin replied sententiously, "They will go to a Country where People do not Export their Beef and Linnen to import Claret, while the Poor at home live on Potatoes and wear Rags. Indeed America has not Beef and Linnen sufficient for Exportation because every man there, even the poorest, eats Beef and wears a Shirt."

Numerous letters came to him from authors inviting his literary criticism, or asking him to accord to them the honor of permitting them to dedicate their works to him. Allamand, the Warden of the forests and waters of the Island of Corsica, wished to know from him what canals there were in America. None, he replied, unless a short water-way, cut, it was said, in a single night across a loop formed by a long bend in Duck Creek, in the State of Delaware, could be called such. Projectors of all kinds solicited his views about their several projects, sane or crack-brained. Sheer beggars, as we have already seen,

were likewise among his correspondents. One, La Baronne de Randerath, tells him that she has been advised by the doctors to take her husband to Aix, and, as her justification for requesting a loan from Franklin for the purpose, she mentions that her husband and Franklin are both Masons, though members of different lodges. Another letter requests him to exercise his influence with the Minister of Marine in behalf of the writer, a sea captain, who wishes to be discharged from the King's service. Dartmouth College, Brown University, Princeton College and Dickinson College all appealed to him for his aid in their efforts to secure money or other gifts abroad. In a word, he was not only world-famous but paid fully all the minor as well as major penalties of world-fame.

How curdled by the animosities of the Revolutionary War was the milk of human kindness even in such an amiable breast as that of Franklin, we have already had reason enough to know. His nature yielded slowly to the intense feelings, aroused by the long conflict between Great Britain and her Colonies, but it was equally slow to part with them when once inflamed. The most notable thing about his attitude towards Great Britain, after the first effusion of American blood at Lexington, was the inexorable firmness with which he repelled all advances upon the part of England that fell short of the recognition of American Independence. When the English Ministry fully realized that Great Britain was not waging war against a few rebellious malcontents but against a whole people in arms, overture after overture was informally made to Franklin by one English emissary or another, in the effort to dissolve the alliance between France and the United States, and to restore, as far as possible, the old connection between Great Britain and America. Among the first of these emissaries was Franklin's good friend, James Hutton. Franklin received him with the most

affectionate kindness, but a letter, which he wrote to Hutton, after Hutton had returned to England, showed how entirely fruitless the journey of the latter had been. A peace, Franklin said, England might undoubtedly obtain by dropping all her pretensions to govern America, but, if she did not, with the peace, recover the affections of the American people, it would be neither a lasting nor a profitable one. To recover the respect and affection of America, England must tread back the steps that she had taken and disgrace the American advisers and promoters of the war, with all those who had inflamed the nation against America by their malicious writings; and all the ministers and generals who had prosecuted the war with such inhumanity. A little generosity, in the way of territorial concessions added to the counsels of necessity, would have a happy effect. For instance, Franklin said, if England would have a real friendly as well as able ally in America, and avoid all occasions of future discord, which would otherwise be continually arising along its American frontiers, it might throw in Canada, Nova Scotia and the Floridas.

Hutton was succeeded by William Pulteney, a member of Parliament. All of his propositions were predicated upon the continued dependence of America. Every proposition, Franklin let him know, which implied the voluntary return of America to dependence on Great Britain was out of the question. The proper course for Great Britain, in his judgment, was to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and to enter into such a treaty of peace, friendship and commerce with them as France itself had formed. The concluding words of Franklin's letter were hardly necessary to convince Pulteney of the hopelessness of his task. "May God at last," they ran, "grant that Wisdom to your national Councils, which he seems long to have deny'd them, and which only sincere, just, and humane Intentions can merit or expect."

Ten days before this letter was written, the American envoys had been presented to the French King. Then followed David Hartley and Mr. George Hammond, the father of the George Hammond, who, many years afterwards, became Minister Plenipotentiary from England to the United States. When they arrived at Paris, it was only to find that the treaty of alliance between France and the United States had already been signed, and to learn soon afterwards that one of its clauses obliged the United States to make common cause with France, in case England declared war against her. How authentic were the credentials of the next emissary it is impossible to say, but Franklin was entirely confident that he came over to France under the direct patronage of George III. The circumstances were these. One morning, a lengthy letter was thrown into a window of Franklin's residence at Passy, written in English, dated at Brussels, and signed Charles de Weissenstein. The letter conjured Franklin in the name of the Just and Omniscient God, before whom all must soon appear, and by his hopes of future fame, to consider if some expedient could not be devised for ending the desolation of America and preventing the war imminent in Europe. It then declared that France would certainly at last betray America, and suggested a plan for the union of England and America. Under the plan, among other things, judges of the American courts were to be named by the King, and to hold their offices for life, and were to bear titles either as peers of America, or otherwise, as should be decided by his Majesty; there were to be septennial sessions of Congress, or more frequent ones, if his Majesty should think fit to call Congress together oftener, but all its proceedings were to be transmitted to the British Parliament, without whose consent no money was ever to be granted by Congress, or any separate State of America to the Crown; the chief offices of the American civil list were to be named in the

plan, and the compensation attached to them was to be paid by America; the naval and military forces of the Union were to be under the direction of his Majesty, but the British Parliament was to fix their extent, and vote the sums necessary for their maintenance. It was also proposed by the letter that, to protect Franklin, Washington, Adams, Hancock and other leaders of the American Revolution from the personal enmity in England, by which their talents might otherwise be kept down, they were to have offices or pensions for life at their option. The promise was also made that, in case his Majesty, or his successors, should ever create American peers, then those persons, or their descendants, were to be among the first peers created, if they desired. Moreover, *Mr.* Washington was to have immediately a brevet of lieutenant-general, and all the honors and precedence incident thereto, but was not to assume or bear any command without a special warrant, or letter of service for that purpose, from the King.

The writer further asked for a personal interview with Franklin for the purpose of discussing the details of the project, or, he stated, if that was not practicable, he would be in a certain part of the Cathedral of Notre Dame on a certain day at noon precisely, with a rose in his hat, to receive a written answer from Franklin which he would transmit directly to the King himself. Franklin laid the letter before his colleagues, and it was agreed that it should be answered by him, and that both it and the answer should be laid before Vergennes, and that the answer should be sent or kept back as Vergennes believed best. The French Minister decided that it had best not be sent. At the hour fixed for the interview, however, an agent of the French police was on hand, and he reported that a gentleman, whose name he afterwards ascertained to be an Irish one by tracking him to his hotel, did appear at the appointed time, and, finding no one to meet him, wan-

dered about the Cathedral, looking at the altars and pictures, but never losing sight of the place suggested for the tryst, and often returning to it, and gazing anxiously about him as if he expected some one. The scornful tone of the letter, drafted by Franklin, which is not unlike one of the scolding speeches, with which the Homeric heroes expressed their opinions of each other, leaves little room for doubt that he truly believed himself to be assailing no less a person than the bigoted King himself. After some savage thrusts, which remind us of those aimed by Hamlet at Polonius behind the arras, he bursts out into these exclamatory words:

> This proposition of delivering ourselves, bound and gagged, ready for hanging, without even a right to complain, and without a friend to be found afterwards among all mankind you would have us embrace upon the faith of an act of Parliament! Good God! An act of your Parliament! This demonstrates that you do not yet know us, and that you fancy we do not know you; but it is not merely this flimsy faith, that we are to act upon; you offer us *hope*, the hope of PLACES, PENSIONS, and PEERAGES. These, judging from yourselves, you think are motives irresistible. This offer to corrupt us, Sir, is with me your credential, and convinces me that you are not a private volunteer in your application. It bears the stamp of British court character. It is even the signature of your King.

The next bearer of the olive branch, who came over to Paris, came under very different auspices. This was William Jones, afterwards Sir William Jones, who was at the time affianced to Anna Maria Shipley. He did not come as the representative of the King or his Ministers, but as the representative of the generous and patriotic Englishmen, who had cherished the same dream of world-wide British unity as Franklin himself, and whose sacrifices in behalf of their fellow-Englishmen in America

should be almost as gratefully remembered by us as the Continental soldiers who perished at Monmouth or Camden. Draping his thoughts with academic terms, he submitted a paper to Dr. Franklin entitled *A Fragment from Polybius* in which England, France, the United States and Franklin are given names borrowed from antiquity, and various suggestions are made for the settlement of the existing controversy between Great Britain and America. England becomes Athens, France, Caria, America, the Islands, and Franklin, Eleutherion; and Jones himself is masked as an Athenian lawyer.

> This I *know* [observes the latter-day Athenian] and positively pronounce, that, while Athens is Athens, her proud but brave citizens will never *expressly* recognize the independence of the Islands; their resources are, no doubt, exhaustible, but will not be exhausted in the lives of us and of our children. In this resolution all parties agree.

There should be, the writer suggested, "a perfect co-ordination between Athens and the Thirteen United Islands, they considering her not as a parent, whom they must obey, but as an elder sister, whom they can not help loving, and to whom they shall give pre-eminence of honor and co-equality of power." Other suggestions were that the new constitutions of the Islands should remain intact, but that, on every occasion, requiring acts for the general good, there should be an assembly of deputies from the Senate of Athens, and the Congress of the Islands, who should fairly adjust the whole business, and settle the ratio of the contributions on both sides; that this committee should consist of fifty Islanders and fifty Athenians, or of a smaller number chosen by them, and that, if it was thought necessary, and found convenient, a proportionate number of Athenian citizens should have seats, and the power of debating and voting on questions of common concern in the great assembly of the Islands,

and a proportionable number of Islanders should sit with the like power in the Assembly at Athens. The whole reminds the reader of the classical fictions to which the first Parliamentary reporters were driven by press censorship. The paper, drafted by Jones, was little more than a mere literary exercise, prompted by ingenuous enthusiasm, but we may be sure that it kindled in Franklin very different feelings from those aroused in him by the insidious appeal of Charles de Weissenstein.

The shortcomings, which Franklin is supposed by his enemies to have exhibited in France with respect to the duties of his post, require but little attention. Apart from a lack of clerical neatness and system, such as might more justly be imputed as a serious reproach to a bookkeeper or clerk, they rest upon evidence easily perverted by enmity or jealousy.[1] Adams had no little to say about Franklin's love of ease and tranquillity, the social and academic distractions, to which he was subject, and the extent to which his time was consumed by curious visitors. It is a sufficient answer to all such disparagement to declare that he successfully dispatched an enormous amount of public business with but very little aid, and unflinchingly bore a load of responsibility only less weighty than that of Washington; that no spy, such as obtained secret access to the papers of Silas Deane and Arthur Lee for the purposes of the British Government, ever abstracted any valuable information from his papers; and that his position in the polite and learned world, and the popular

[1] A Commissioner, Thomas Barclay, was appointed by Congress to audit the accounts of all the servants of the United States who had been entrusted with the expenditure of money in Europe during the Revolutionary War. "I rendered to him," said Franklin in a letter to Cyrus Griffin, the President of Congress, dated Nov. 29, 1788, "all my accounts, which he examined, and stated methodically. By this statement he found a balance due me on the 4th of May, 1785, of 7,533 livres, 19 sols, 3 den., which I accordingly received of the Congress banker; the difference between my statement and his being only seven sols, which by mistake I had overcharged;—about three pence half penny sterling."

curiosity, excited by his fame, were among the things which tended most effectually to recommend him to the favor of the French People and Ministry. The effort was also made by John Adams to create the impression that Franklin was unduly subservient to the influence of France, and that, but for the superior firmness of John Jay and himself, the United States would not have concluded a peace with England on terms anything like so favorable as those actually obtained from her.

In what respects Franklin can be truly said to have been servile to French influence, it is impossible to see. If by this is meant that he did not share the prejudices of Adams and Jay against the French people, did not harbor their keen distrust of the motives of the French ministry and did not feel as free as they to ignore the proprieties, arising out of the profound obligations of America to France, the reflection is just enough. Neither Adams nor Jay ever succeeded in making himself sufficiently acceptable to the French people or ministry, or obtained sufficient benefits from them for his countrymen, to feel any sense of personal indebtedness to them, or to be inclined to show any unusual degree of consideration to them. This was true of Jay, if for no other reason, because his intercourse with them was but limited in point of time. Franklin, on the other hand, was the idol of the French people, and received from Vergennes as decisive proofs of confidence as one individual can confer upon another. No one could have been in a better position than he was to know that the French alliance was hardly more the fruit of selfish policy upon the part of the French ministry, or of a desire upon its part to avenge historic injuries, than of the generous sensibility of the French people to the liberal and democratic impulses, which were hurrying them on to the fiercest outbreak of uncalculating enthusiasm that the world has ever seen. He had never entered the cabinet of the French Minister

to sue for pecuniary aid without coming away with a fresh cordial for the drooping energies of his people. That upright and able minister, he wrote to Samuel Huntington, on one occasion, had never promised him anything which he did not punctually perform.[1] No matter how dark were the thick clouds that enveloped the fate of his country, no matter how acute was the pecuniary distress of France herself, there was always another million at the bottom of the stocking of the French tax-payer for the land of freedom and opportunity. Franklin had even known what it was to beg for a loan from the French King and to receive it as a gracious gift. He would have been fashioned of ignoble materials, indeed, if he had been too quick, in seeking the selfish advantage of his country, to forget the extraordinary magnanimity of her ally, and to suspect a disposition upon her part to deprive the United States of the just rewards of the triumph, which they might never have achieved but for her. And he, at any rate, with his strong sense of justice, was not likely to commit himself with unhesitating alacrity to a cold-blooded scramble for concessions from England to America which took no account of the fact that France not only had the interests of America, but also her own necessities to consult, and that it was as essential to her interests that America should not make peace with England before she did, as it was to the interests of America that France should not make peace with England before America did.

[1] The dogged steadfastness with which Vergennes pursued his task of humbling the pride and power of England through her rebellious colonies was in keeping with the main point of what Choiseul had said about him as the French Ambassador at Constantinople: "The Count de Vergennes has something to say against whatever is proposed to him, but he never finds any difficulty in carrying out his instructions. Were we to order him to send us the Vizier's head, he would write that it was dangerous, but the head would come." The levity of Maurepas, as President of the Council of State, and the grave diligence of Vergennes, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, led D'Aranda to say of them, "I chat with M. de Maurepas, I negotiate with M. de Vergennes."

In the Treaty of Alliance, France had assumed no obligation to the United States except that of continuing to wage war against England until their independence was acknowledged, and of not concluding any peace with England that did not include them. She had never bound herself to secure to America the right of fishery on the Newfoundland Banks, or to oppose every restriction upon the extension of her western boundaries. In the course of the war, there was a time when the situation of America was so desperate that Vergennes was, with perfect fidelity to the American cause, brought to the conclusion that the Thirteen States might well afford to surrender a part of their territory to England as the price of independence; and this was a conclusion to which any honest American mind might have been brought under the circumstances. And, even after this crisis had passed, and negotiations for peace were pending between Great Britain and the Allies, it is not surprising that he should not have foreseen that he would ever have occasion to say, as he did after England and America came to terms, that England had bought rather than made a peace, but should have thought that England might still hold out stubbornly enough to cause even America to feel that she could be reasonably expected by France to forego more than one minor expectation to make certain of her independence. There was also the fact, which could hardly escape the attention of a man so deferential to the authority of his principals as Franklin always was, that Congress had positively instructed its Commissioners to make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the minister of its generous ally, the King of France, to undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace or a truce without the knowledge and concurrence of the Minister and King, and ultimately to govern themselves by their advice and opinion.

And there was also the fact that Franklin had always

had such marked success in influencing the conclusions of Vergennes, that he might well have confided in his ability to bring the French minister over to any reasonable views that he might form about the results that America had the right to expect from the Peace; particularly as Vergennes had long been possessed with a haunting fear that America might be detached from her alliance with France.

In the light of all these circumstances, it is not strange that Franklin should have been reluctant, in the first instance, to unite with Adams and Jay in signing the preliminary treaty of peace with England without previously consulting with Vergennes; for that is the only tangible foundation for the claim that he was too submissive to the selfish designs of France; and there is no substantial evidence that any real point was gained by America by the act, or that it awakened any feeling in Vergennes profounder than the passing disappointment, born of realized distrust and affronted pride, which led him to write to M. de la Luzerne, the French Minister to the United States, immediately after it as follows:

> I think it proper that the most influential members of Congress should be informed of the very irregular conduct of their Commissioners in regard to us. You may speak of it not in the tone of complaint. I accuse no person; I blame no one, not even Dr. Franklin. He has yielded too easily to the bias of his colleagues, who do not pretend to recognize the rules of courtesy in regard to us. All their attentions have been taken up by the English whom they have met in Paris. If we may judge of the future from what has passed here under our eyes, we shall be but poorly paid for all that we have done for the United States, and for securing to them a national existence.

When we recollect how faithfully France had rejected every effort upon the part of England to treat for peace with her separately, and insisted that the treaty of peace

between England and France, on the one hand, and the treaty of peace between England and the United States, on the other, should go hand in hand, how entirely Vergennes had refrained from inquiring into the course of the pending negotiations between England and our commissioners, which resulted in the signing of the preliminary treaty of peace between England and the United States; and how singularly limited was the measure of concession that France asked for herself from England, these words cannot be read by any true American without a highly painful impression.

When Franklin appealed, after the peace, to both Adams and Jay to deny the statement, current in America, that he had not stood up stoutly for American rights, when the peace was being concluded, Jay complied with unreserved emphasis, and Adams with a reluctant note which rendered his testimony but the stronger. The truth is that, if Franklin's conduct during the peace negotiations was not admirable in every respect, it was only because he found that he could not decline to unite with his colleagues in violating the instruction of Congress without breaking with them and hazarding discord that might be fatal to the interests of his country. He did not, of course, believe that France, after the enormous sacrifices that she had made for American independence, was engaged in a treacherous effort to shackle the growth of the United States. He could not readily have entertained such a totally ungrounded suspicion as that which led Jay, when he learnt that De Rayneval was going over to London to have an interview with Shelburne, to leap to the conclusion that it was for the purpose of confounding American aspirations, and to inform Shelburne that now was the time for England to outbid France for the favor of America by executing at once preliminary articles of peace, conceding to America the points about which she was most concerned. The overture was a bold one, but if it had not been accepted

in the manner that it was, and had been communicated by Shelburne to Vergennes, it might have been attended by consequences inimical to the Alliance which even the personal influence of Franklin might not have been able to prevent. Franklin was too prudent to risk rashly the support of an ally, from which the United States still found it necessary to borrow money, even after their independence was acknowledged, and too grateful to risk lightly the friendship of an ally which had not only aided the United States with soldiers, ships and money to secure their independence, but had repeatedly declined to treat with England except on the basis of American independence. His inclination naturally and properly enough was to maintain with Vergennes until the last the frank and intimate relations that he had always maintained with him; to avoid everything that might have the least savor of faithlessness or sharp practice in the opinion of our ally, and to rely upon our growing importance and the ordinary appeals of argument and persuasion for a peace at once fair and just to both the United States and France. But never once from the time that he wrote to Lord Shelburne the brief letter, that initiated the negotiations for peace between England and the United States, until the day that he threw himself, after the consummation of peace, into the arms of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, saying, "My friend! Could I have hoped at my age to enjoy such a happiness," was he animated by any purpose except that of securing for his countrymen the most generous terms that he could. It is by no means improbable that, if he had been our sole negotiator, he would not only have obtained for us all that was secured by his Fellow-Commissioners and himself but Canada besides, and would, moreover, have saved the United States the reproach that justly attached to them because of the precipitate signature of the preliminary articles of peace. As we have already seen, the acquisition of Canada by the United

States was something that he had definitely in mind even before the negotiations for peace began, and, when they did begin, this was one of the things that he specified in a memorandum that he gave to Oswald, the British envoy, as concessions that it was advisable for England to make, and we also know from the correspondence of Oswald that it was a topic to which his conversation frequently turned. With such address did he ply Oswald upon this point that the latter went so far as to say that it might be conceded. To compass it, he was even willing to agree that the Loyalists should be compensated by the United States for their losses; which was the point upon which the English Ministry was most earnestly bent, and the one which aroused in him feelings of the deepest antagonism. What a trifling recompense the compensation of the Loyalists would have been for such an addition to our national domain as Canada we hardly need say; nor need we dilate upon the far-sighted statesmanship which so surely foresaw what futurity held in store for a country which, as late as 1760, had been gravely proposed to be exchanged with France for the Island of Guadeloupe. It is to be regretted by the United States, if the present happy lot of Canada is to be the subject of regret at all, that the desire of Franklin to secure Canada for them was not more urgently seconded by Adams and Jay. The former was enthusiastically resolved, as was but proper, to secure for New England the right to fish on the Newfoundland Banks, and the latter was especially eager, as any statesman with the slightest glow of imagination might well have been, to remove every obstacle in our pathway westward. Neither appears to have been zealously alive to the considerations, which led Franklin to cast a covetous eye upon Canada, and to make it one of the primary objects of his efforts to promote the interests of America during the peace negotiations. On the other hand, Franklin was not less impressed than they were

with the importance of our North Eastern Fisheries and our Western Destiny; and was quite as stiff as they in maintaining our rights with respect to them. Moreover, when the insistence of the English Ministry upon compensation for the Loyalists threatened to be the only rock, upon which the negotiations were likely to split, it was his suggestiveness which relieved the situation by proposing, as an offset to the losses of the Loyalists, the payment by England of the pecuniary losses wantonly inflicted by her upon the inhabitants of such towns as Fairfield and Norfolk on our Atlantic seaboard. After this timely counter-claim, a compromise was soon reached, under which it was agreed that the Loyalists should be referred to the justice of the individual States with a favorable recommendation from the Commissioners. This was but a diplomatic way of disposing of the proposition adversely without seeming to do so, for Shelburne as well as the American Commissioners must have realized that the recommendation was the only form of indemnity that the Loyalists were likely to obtain.

Friendly as Franklin was to the French Court, it was only where some treaty stipulation was involved, or some definite rule of courtesy was to be observed, that he recognized the right of France to influence the course of the negotiations between England and the American Commissioners. He knew as well as Adams and Jay that French policy, partly because of considerations, peculiar to France herself, and partly because of obligations, that France owed to Spain, differed in some very material respects from American policy. But he entertained the belief, and justly entertained the belief, that this was no reason why Vergennes should necessarily be moved by the settled, perfidious purpose of arresting an agreement between England and America until the negotiations between England and France and Spain had gone too far for the United States to be any longer in the position to

insist effectively upon their fishery and boundary claims. The disposition of the French Minister to contemplate contingencies, in which concessions would have to be made by America, was in Franklin's judgment "due to the moderation of the minister and to his desire of removing every obstacle to speedy negotiations for peace"; and there is no real reason to believe that he was not right. It is quite true that Marbois, when he was the French Secretary of Legation in the United States, in his famous letter to Vergennes, which the English were at pains to bring to the notice of John Jay, suggested to Vergennes that he should let the Americans know that their pretensions to the Newfoundland fisheries were not well founded, and that the French King did not mean to support them; but, as Vergennes wrote to M. de la Luzerne, the successor of Gérard, the opinion of Marbois was not necessarily that of the King, and, moreover the views of his letter had not been followed. When Franklin made his suggestion to Oswald in respect to Canada, he did not bring it to the knowledge of Vergennes. In the very commencement of the negotiations between England and the United States, he let it be known to Grenville, the envoy of Charles James Fox, that, when Great Britain acknowledged the independence of America, the treaty, that America had made with France for gaining it, ended, and no conventional tie remained between America and France but that of the treaty of commerce which England, too, might establish between America and herself, if she pleased. Indeed, Vergennes himself clearly recognized the right of the American Commissioners to make the best terms that they could for themselves in the matter of the fisheries, the western boundaries or any other object of American policy.

We are [he wrote Luzerne on April 9, 1782], and shall always be, disposed to consent that the American plenipotentiaries

in Europe should treat according to their instructions directly and without our intervention with those of the Court of London, while we on our side shall treat in the same way, provided that the two negotiations continue at the same rate, and that the two treaties shall be signed the same day, and shall not be good the one without the other.

The hesitation of Franklin about executing the preliminary articles of peace between England and the United States was not due to any doubt as to the technical right of the American Commissioners to sign it, aside from the instruction of Congress that they were not to take any important step without the advice of the French Ministry. He hesitated to sign it because he was subject to this instruction, and also because he felt that for the Commissioners to sign such a treaty, without taking Vergennes into their confidence, was hardly compatible with the scrupulous deference due to such a timely, generous and powerful ally as France had proved herself to be and might be again. His reason for disregarding the instruction of Congress, and uniting with his colleagues in signing the articles doubtless was that he deemed it unwise, in any view of the case, not to subordinate his own judgment, after full discussion, to that of the majority of the Commission in a case where, if the French Minister were acting in bad faith, it was but proper that his bad faith should be anticipated, and where, if he were acting in good faith, his resentment was not likely to be more serious than that which is usually visited upon a mere breach of diplomatic decorum. The execution of the articles was expressly made subject to the proviso that they were to have no force, if England did not reach an understanding with France also. Without such a proviso, the action of our Commissioners, of course, would have merited the contempt of the world. With it, Franklin was left free to say, disingenuously it must be confessed, to Vergennes that, in signing the articles, the Commissioners had at the most

been guilty of neglecting a point of *bienséance*. No one knew better than he that no such soothing pretence could be set up by Adams and Jay, and that, even as respected himself, though the extent of his offence consisted, as Vergennes truly divined, in yielding to the bias of his colleagues, he had been drawn into a position in which it was impossible for him to separate himself wholly from either the motives or the moral responsibilities of his colleagues. In transmitting with them to Congress a copy of the articles, he united with them in this statement:

> As we had reason to imagine that the Articles respecting the boundaries, the refugees and fisheries, did not correspond with the policy of this court, we did not communicate the preliminaries to the Minister until after they were signed, and not even then the separate Article. We hope that these considerations will excuse our having so far deviated from the spirit of our instructions. The Count de Vergennes, on perusing the Articles, appeared surprised, but not displeased, at their being so favorable to us.

The separate article was one fixing the northern boundary of West Florida, in case Great Britain, at the conclusion of the war, should recover, or be put in possession of, that Province. In reply to a letter from Robert R. Livingston, disapproving the manner, in which the articles had been signed, Franklin said that they had done what appeared to all of them best at the time, and, if they had done wrong, the Congress would do right, after hearing them, to censure them. The nomination by Congress of five persons to the service, he further said, seemed to mark that they had some dependence on their joint judgment, since one alone could have made a treaty by direction of the French Ministry, as well as twenty. But there can be no doubt that the individual views of Franklin about the aims of the French Court, in relation to the United States, are to be

found not in the letter of the Commissioners to Congress, but in his own words in this same reply to Livingston:

I will only add [he said] that, with respect to myself, neither the Letter from M. de Marbois, handed us thro' the British Negociators (a suspicious Channel) nor the Conversations respecting the Fishery, the Boundaries, the Royalists, &c., recommending Moderation in our Demands, are of Weight sufficient in my Mind to fix an Opinion, that this Court wish'd to restrain us in obtaining any Degree of Advantage we could prevail on our Enemies to accord; since those Discourses are fairly resolvable, by supposing a very natural Apprehension, that we, relying too much on the Ability of France to continue the War in our favour, and supply us constantly with Money, might insist on more Advantages than the English would be willing to grant, and thereby lose the Opportunity of making Peace, so necessary to all our friends.

It is impossible, however, to believe that Franklin could have taken such a step except with grave misgivings as to its effect on the mind of Vergennes. This is shown by the reserve which he, as well as his fellow-commissioners, maintained towards Vergennes, while the preliminary articles were being matured.

According to the injunctions of Congress [Vergennes wrote to Luzerne], they should have done nothing without our participation. I have pointed out to you, Sir, that the King would not have sought to interest himself in the negotiations, save in so far as his offices might be necessary to his friends. The American Commissioners will not say that I have sought to intervene in their business, still less that I have wearied them by my curiosity. They have kept themselves carefully out of my way.

It must have taxed even the nice judgment of Franklin to calculate precisely the degree of resentment that the act of the Commissioners would excite. He took the precaution of sending a copy of the articles to Vergennes the day after they were signed. His receipt of them was

followed by an ominous silence. Some days later, Franklin called upon Vergennes, and the latter took pains to let him perceive that the signing of the articles had little in it which could be agreeable to the King, and Franklin advanced such excuses for his colleagues and himself as the case permitted. According to Vergennes, the conversation was amicable, but for a time it did not efface the impression that his mind had received. A week or so later, when Franklin proposed to send the preliminary articles to America by a ship, for which an English passport had been provided, and was soliciting a loan of twenty millions of francs from France, Vergennes gave him a bad quarter of an hour.

I am at a loss sir [he said] to explain your conduct, and that of your colleagues on this occasion. You have concluded your preliminary articles without any communication between us, although the instructions from Congress prescribe that nothing shall be done without the participation of the King. You are about to hold out a certain hope of peace to America, without even informing yourself on the state of the negotiation on our part. You are wise and discreet, sir; you perfectly understand what is due to propriety; you have all your life performed your duties. I pray you to consider how you propose to fulfill those, which are due to the King! I am not desirous of enlarging these reflections; I commit them to your own integrity. When you shall be pleased to relieve my uncertainty, I will entreat the King to enable me to answer your demands.

The reply of Franklin was almost abject.

Nothing [he said] has been agreed in the preliminaries contrary to the interests of France; and no peace is to take place between us and England, till you have concluded yours. Your observation is, however, apparently just, that, in not consulting you before they were signed, we have been guilty of neglecting a point of *bienséance*. But, as this was not from

want of respect for the King, whom we all love and honour, we hope it will be excused, and that the great work, which has hitherto been so happily conducted, is so nearly brought to perfection, and is so glorious to his reign, will not be ruined by a single indiscretion of ours. And certainly the whole edifice sinks to the ground immediately, if you refuse on that account to give us any further assistance.

Again, unpromising as the conditions were, there was no resisting the voice of the seductive mendicant. France did not lend the twenty millions of francs to the United States because she did not have that much to lend; but she did lend six. If any loss of dignity or self-respect was suffered on this occasion it was not by her.

The definitive treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States was signed at Paris on September 3, 1783, and was ratified a few months later by both the contracting powers. Several weeks after it was signed, Franklin again tendered his resignation to Congress, but it was not accepted until March 7, 1785. Three days later, Jefferson, who had been in France ever since August, 1784, for the purpose of co-operating with Franklin and Adams in the negotiation of commercial treaties with England and other European countries, was appointed the American plenipotentiary at the Court of Versailles in the place of Franklin.

Shortly after the return of Franklin to Philadelphia, he was elected President of the Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and, in 1787, he was elected a member of the convention which adopted the Federal Constitution. There was only one man in the United States whose claims to the Presidency of the Convention could possibly be deemed paramount to his; and that was Washington. The nomination of Washington to the position was to have been made by him, but the weather on the day, fixed for it, was too bad to permit him at his advanced age, and in his infirm condition, to venture

abroad. The honor of making the nomination, therefore, fell to Robert Morris, another member of the Pennsylvania delegation. It was thought becoming and graceful in Pennsylvania, Madison tells us, to pass by her own distinguished citizen as President, and to take the lead in giving that pre-eminence to the late Commander-in-Chief of the American Army, which the country felt to be his due.[1] At the next session of the Convention, Franklin was present, and thereafter he attended its sessions regularly for five hours each day for more than four months. His stone made it impossible for him to stand long upon his feet, and, when he participated on any important occasion in the discussions of the body, it was his habit to reduce his thoughts to writing, and to have them read to the body by one of his colleagues, usually James Wilson. Copies of these speeches were made by Madison from the original manuscripts for his reports of the debates of the Convention, and, unlike the speeches of the other leading members of the Assembly, the speeches of Franklin have consequently come down to us in their entirety. Of his general course in the Convention, it is enough to say that it was strongly marked by liberalism, faith in the popular intelligence and virtue, and the aversion to arbitrary power which was always such a prominent feature of his conduct in every relation. He had a quick eye to the abuses of authority, and it is probable that, if he had been a younger man, when the Convention met, and had lived until the clash between the Federalists and the Republicans arose, he would have been a Republican. Inane idealism, lack

[1] In a letter to William Carmichael in 1788, after saying that he presumed that there would not be a vote against the election of Washington to the Presidency, Jefferson added: "It is more doubtful who will be Vice-President. The age of Dr. Franklin, and the doubt whether he would accept it, are the only circumstances that admit a question, but that he would be the man." Some twenty-two years afterwards, he wrote to Col. William Duane that he believed that a greater or better character than Franklin had rarely existed.

of energy and resolution did not belong to his character, but, to say nothing more, what he had seen of the workings of monarchical and aristocratic institutions, during the long dispute between England and her colonies, was not calculated to prejudice him in their favor.[1]

The compensation that should be paid to the Chief Magistrate of the Union was the first topic to which he formally addressed himself as a member of the Convention. In his opinion, no pecuniary compensation should be paid to him. The argument that he pursued in support of his proposition was one that he had often made with respect to the Government of Great Britain.

Sir [he said] there are two Passions which have a powerful Influence in the Affairs of Men. These are *Ambition and Avarice*; the Love of Power and the Love of Money. Separately, each of these has great Force in prompting Men to Action; but when united in View of the same Object, they have in many Minds the most violent Effects. Place before the Eyes of such Men a Post of *Honour*, that shall at the same time be a Place of *Profit*, and they will move Heaven and Earth to obtain it. The vast Number of such Places it is that renders the British Government so tempestuous. The Struggles for them are the true source of all those Factions which are perpetually dividing the Nation, distracting its Councils, hurrying it some-

[1] Optimist and thorough-going democrat as Franklin was, Shays' Rebellion and the heated conflict of opposing principles, concomitant with the adoption of the Federal Constitution, set up a slight current of reaction in his sanguine nature. On May 25, 1789, he wrote to Charles Carroll of Carrollton: "We have been guarding against an evil that old States are most liable to, *excess of power*, in the rulers; but our present danger seems to be *defect of obedience* in the subjects." Some six months later, in his *Queries and Remarks respecting Alterations in the Constitution of Pennsylvania*, he quoted the advice of the prophet, "Stand in the old ways, view the ancient Paths, consider them well, and be not among those that are given to Change." But in this instance Franklin was really invoking the spirit of conservatism in aid of liberalism; for the occasion for the Biblical reference was the suggestion that the Pennsylvania Assembly should no longer consist of a single chamber but of an Upper House based on property and a Lower House based on population.

times into fruitless and mischievous Wars, and often compelling a Submission to dishonorable Terms of Peace.

The argument, of course, fell upon deaf ears. It really presupposes a numerous class, at once sufficiently free from pecuniary anxieties to give its exclusive attention to public duties, and sufficiently qualified to discharge them with the requisite degree of success. Such a class was not to be found in America, at any rate, and, even if it was, it would have been invidious in the eyes of a democratic community to limit the enjoyment of public office to it. The subsequent history of the Republic showed that, in the beginning of our national existence, even moderate salaries did not suffice to keep some of the ablest men in the United States from declining or resigning federal office. The long journeys and the bad roads and taverns of that day were probably responsible for this state of things. In the first thirty years after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, no less than one hundred and ten seats in the United States Senate were resigned, and Washington experienced great difficulty in inducing lawyers to accept positions even on the Supreme Bench of the United States. It is a remarkable fact that, during the first thirty years after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, ten persons either declined to serve as associate justices of the Supreme Court, or resigned the office. It is a still more remarkable fact that both Jay and Ellsworth resigned as Chief Justice after brief terms of office. There was, however, undoubtedly an element of expediency in the views of Franklin, for it is no uncommon thing in the United States to see the supervisory functions of certain offices, connected with the educational or eleemosynary systems of the country, more efficiently and faithfully exercised, when exercised without pay by men, in whom public spirit or philanthropic zeal is highly developed, than they would be,

if exercised by the very different kind of men who would be attracted to them, if salaried.

In connection with another question, the extent to which the superior wealth and population of the larger states were to be represented in Congress, it was the fortune of Franklin to exert a powerful and decisive influence. The debate over this question was so protracted and heated, the smaller States demanding equal representation with the larger in both Houses of Congress, and the larger repelling the claim as utterly unreasonable and unjust, that it looked, at one time, as if the Convention would break up like a ship lodged on a fatal rock. Then it was that Franklin found out to his surprise that his colleagues did not set the same value as himself upon the harmonizing influence of prayer. Not only was his suggestion that the proceedings of the Convention be opened each day with it rejected, but the controversy became more acrimonious than ever; John Dickinson, one of the members from Delaware, who always had a way of chafing in harness, even declaring that rather than be deprived of an equality of representation in the Legislature he would prefer to be a foreign subject. At this point, Franklin came forward with a proposition of compromise, accompanied by one of his happy illustrations.

> The diversity of opinion [he said] turns on two points. If a proportional representation take place, the small States contend that their liberties will be in danger. If an equality of votes is to be put into its place, the larger States say their money will be in danger. When a broad table is to be made, and the edges of the planks do not fit, the artist takes a little from both, and makes a good joint.

He then proposed that all the States should have an equal number of delegates in Congress, and that on all questions affecting the authority or sovereignty of a State, or, when appointments and confirmations were

under consideration, every State should have an equal vote, but that on bills to raise or expend money every State should have a vote proportioned to its population. This compromise did not meet with the favor of the smaller States. Under the lead of Dickinson, they still contended for unvarying equality between them and the larger States. At length, a committee was appointed to consider the matter, and to report a compromise, and Franklin was one of its members. It came back with a plan, proposed by his constructive intellect, namely, that, in the Senate, every State should have equal representation, but that, in the other House, every State should have a representation proportioned to its population; and that bills to raise or expend money should originate in the other House. The report of the committee was adopted, and no device of the Constitution has, in practice, more strikingly vindicated the wisdom of the brain by which it was conceived than that hit upon by Franklin for disarming the jealousy and fears of the smaller States represented in the Convention.

He approved the proposed article making the presidential term of office seven years, and declaring its incumbent ineligible for a second term. The sagacity of this conclusion has been confirmed by experience. There was nothing degrading, Franklin thought, in the idea of the magistrate returning to the mass of the people; for in free governments rulers are the servants, and the people are their superiors and sovereigns. The same popular bias manifested itself when the proposition was made to limit the suffrage to freeholders. "It is of great consequence," he said, "that we should not depress the virtue and public spirit of our common people, of which they displayed a great deal during the war, and which contributed principally to the favorable issue of it." The British statute, setting forth the danger of tumultuous meetings, and, under that pretext, narrowing the right of

suffrage to persons having freeholds of a certain value, was soon followed, he added, by another, subjecting the people, who had no votes, to peculiar labors and hardships. Some days later, Madison informs us, he expressed his dislike to everything that tended to debase the spirit of the common people. If honesty was often the companion of wealth, and, if poverty was exposed to peculiar temptations, it was not less true, he declared, that the possession of property increased the desire for more property. Some of the greatest rogues he was ever acquainted with were the richest rogues. They should remember the character which the Scriptures require in rulers, that they should be men hating covetousness. The Constitution would be much read and attended in Europe, and, if it should betray a great partiality to the rich, would not only cost them the esteem of the most liberal and enlightened men there, but discourage the common people from removing to America.

He strongly favored the clause giving Congress the power to impeach the President. When the head of the government cannot be lawfully called to account, the people have no recourse, he said, against oppression but revolution and assassination. These, it should be recollected, were the utterances of a man who was from age too near the end of political ambition to be possibly influenced by demagogic designs of any sort. Franklin also opposed the idea of conferring an absolute veto upon the President, and the requirement of fourteen years' residence as a condition of citizenship. Four years he believed to be enough. He approved the article making an overt act essential to the crime of treason, and exacting the evidence of two witnesses to establish the overt act.

He also forcibly expressed his views with regard to the respective powers with which the two Houses of Congress should be invested. When the Convention was drawing to a close, he urged its members in a tactful and persuasive

speech to lay aside their individual disappointments, and to give their work to the world with the stamp of unanimity. As is well known, when the last members were signing, he looked towards the President's chair, at the back of which there was a representation of a rising sun, and, after observing to some of his associates near him that painters had found it difficult in their art to distinguish a rising from a setting sun, he concluded with this exultant peroration: "I have often and often, in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that behind the President, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting: but now, at length, I have the happiness to know, that it is a rising and not a setting sun." And a rising sun, indeed, it was, starting out upon its splendid circuit like the sun in the lines of Charles Lamb, "with all his fires and travelling glories round him."

The opinions of Franklin with regard to general political topics are always acute and interesting, and, unlike the opinions of most great men, even the greatest, are rarely, if ever, flecked by the errors of his time. In some quarters, there has been a disposition to reproach him with being an advocate of what since his day has come to be known in the United States as rag or fiat money. The reproach loses sight of the fact that the currency problems, with which he had to deal, did not turn upon the true respective functions of paper and real money, under conditions that permit their application to their several natural and proper uses. No such conditions existed in America during the colonial period or the Revolutionary War. There was no California, Alaska, Nevada, or Colorado then. "Gold and Silver," Franklin said in 1767, in his *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money*, "are not the Produce of *North-America*, which has no Mines."

Every civilized community, unless it is to be remanded to mere barter, must have some kind of convenient

medium for the exchange of commodities and the payment of debts, even though it be no better than wampum or tobacco. Paper money, whether it bore interest or not, and whether it was a legal tender or not, was, unsupported by any real provision for its redemption, a dangerous currency for America, in her early history, as it is for any country, whatever its state of maturity; but she had no choice. It was either that or something not even as good on the whole for monetary purposes. Not only were there no gold or silver mines in North America, but the balance of trade between the Colonies and Great Britain was so greatly in favor of the latter country that even such gold and silver coin, as found its way to them, was at once drawn off to her.

However fit [bitterly declared Franklin in the pamphlet, to which we have just referred], a particular Thing may be for a particular Purpose, wherever that Thing is not to be had, or not to be had in sufficient Plenty, it becomes necessary to use something else, the fittest that can be got, in lieu of it.

In America, this undoubtedly was a paper currency, even though issued as real, and not representative, money. At times, in the history of the Colonies, it worked much pecuniary loss and debasement of morals, but, makeshift as it was, it was the best makeshift that the situation of the Colonies allowed; and, when New England petitioned for the Act of Parliament, depriving it of the legal-tender quality within her limits, it was only, Franklin contended, because the close intercourse between the four provinces, of which she was constituted, and the large supply of hard money, derived by her from her whale and cod fisheries, took the sting out of the act. But, when the act was afterwards extended to the other colonies, it became a real grievance, and, as such, was stated by Franklin, in his examination before the House of Commons, to be one of the

causes, which had lessened the respect of the Colonies for Parliament. "It seems hard therefore," he said in the paper just mentioned, "to draw all their real Money from them, and then refuse them the poor Privilege of using Paper instead of it." In the same essay, the circumstances, in which the need for a paper currency in the Colonies originated, are stated in his perspicuous manner: "The Truth is, that the Balance of their Trade with Britain being generally against them, the Gold and Silver is drawn out to pay that Balance; and then the Necessity of some Medium of Trade has induced the making of Paper Money, which could not be carried away."

In his capacity as colonial agent, Franklin earnestly strove to secure the repeal of the British legislation, forbidding the use of paper money in the Colonies as a legal tender, and he even enlisted for this purpose the aid of a large body of London merchants, engaged in the American trade, but his efforts met with slight success. Some of the members of the Board of Trade, who had united in recommending the restraint upon colonial paper money, were, it was said, at the time in the state of mind of Soame Jenyns, who had laughingly declared, when he was asked as a member of the Board to concur in some measure, "I have no kind of objection to it, provided we have heretofore signed nothing to the contrary."[1] Worse still, Grenville threw out the chilling suggestion in the House of Commons that Great Britain should make the paper money for the Colonies, issue it upon loan there, take the

[1] This remark brings up in a timely way another member of the Board of Trade, Lord Clare, whose habits were such as to aid us in understanding why the Board did not always retain a clear recollection of its past transactions. Speaking of an interview with him, Franklin wrote to his son: "He gave me a great deal of flummery; saying, that though at my Examination (before the House of Commons) I answered some of his questions a little pertly, yet he liked me, from that day, for the spirit I showed in defence of my country; and at parting, after we had drank a bottle and a half of claret each, he hugged and kissed me, protesting he never in his life met with a man he was so much in love with."

interest and apply it as Parliament might think proper.[1] This suggestion, and the interest excited by it led to a letter from Franklin to Galloway in which he said that he was not for applying again very soon for a repeal of the restraining act. "I am afraid," he remarked, "an ill use will be made of it. The plan of our adversaries is to render Assemblies in America useless; and to have a revenue independent of their grants, for all the purposes of their defence, and supporting governments among them."

These comments were followed by the suggestion that the Pennsylvania Assembly might be petitioned by the more prominent citizens of Pennsylvania to authorize a moderate emission of paper money, though without the legal-tender feature; the petition to be accompanied by a mutual engagement upon the part of the petitioners to take the money in all business transactions at rates fixed by law. Or, perhaps, Franklin said, a bank might be established that would meet the currency needs of the community. In any event, should the scarcity of money continue, they would rely more upon their own industrial resources, to the detriment of the British merchant, and by keeping in Pennsylvania the real cash, that came into it, would, in time, have a quantity sufficient for all

[1] The story told by Franklin of a running colloquy between George Grenville, who had on one occasion, as usual, been denouncing the Americans as rebels and Colonel Onslow, a warm friend of America, is good enough to be related. After recalling the Roman practice of sending a commission to a disaffected province for the purpose of investigating the causes of its discontent, Onslow declared his willingness, if the House of Commons should think fit to appoint them, to go over to America *with that honorable gentleman*. "Upon this there was a great laugh, which continued some time, and was rather increased by Mr. Grenville's asking, 'Will the gentleman engage, that I shall be safe there? Can I be assured that I shall be allowed to come back again to make the report?' As soon as the laugh was so far subsided, as that Mr. Onslow could be heard again, he added: 'I can not absolutely engage for the honorable gentleman's safe return, but if he goes thither upon this service, I am strongly of opinion the *event* will contribute greatly to the future quiet of both countries.' On which the laugh was renewed and redoubled."

their occasions. The same thought, tinged with a trace of resentment, emerges in one of his letters to Lord Kames:

> As I think a scarcity of money will work with our other present motives for lessening our fond extravagance in the use of the superfluous manufactures of this country, which unkindly grudges us the enjoyment of common rights, and will tend to lead us naturally into industry and frugality, I am grown more indifferent about the repeal of the act, and, if my countrymen will be advised by me, we shall never ask it again.[1]

The relations sustained by Franklin to the Continental paper currency we have already seen. There was an apparent element of inconsistency in his suggestion that it should bear interest; for interest-bearing bills, he had contended in his *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money*, were objectionable as currency, because it was tedious to calculate interest on one of them, as often as it changed hands, and also because a distinct advantage was to be gained by hoarding them.

The Continental bills depreciated so rapidly that in 1777 the price of a bushel of salt at Baltimore was nine pounds. Three years later, the price of a yard of cassimere in America was $300, and of a yard of jean and habit cloth $60. Inflated as the bills were, Franklin with his cheerful habit of mind was not at a loss to say a good word for them. There was some advantage to the general public, at any rate, he wrote to Stephen Sayre, in the facility with which taxes could be paid off with the de-

[1] The principal features of a plan for the issuance of a stable colonial currency proposed by Franklin and Governor Pownall to the British Ministry, in 1764, 1765 and 1766 were these: bills of credit to a certain amount were to be printed in England for the use of the Colonies; and a loan office was to be established in each colony, empowered to issue the bills, take security for their payment and receive payment of them. They were to be paid in full in ten years, ar 1 were to bear interest at the rate of five per centum per annum; and one tenth of the principal was to be paid each year with the proper proportion of interest. They were to be a legal tender.

preciated paper. Congress, he wrote to Dr. Cooper, had blundered in not earlier adopting his suggestion that the interest on the bills should be paid in real money.

> The *only Remedy* now [he said] seems to be a Diminution of the Quantity by a vigourous Taxation, of great *nominal* Sums, which the People are more able to pay, in proportion to the Quantity and diminished Value; and the *only Consolation* under the Evil is, that the Publick Debt is proportionably diminish'd with the Depreciation; and this by a kind of imperceptible Tax, everyone having paid a Part of it in the Fall of Value that took place between his receiving and Paying such Sums as pass'd thro' his hands.

In this same letter, Franklin declared that it was a mystery to foreign politicians how America had been able to continue a war for four years without money, and how it could pay with paper that had no previously fixed fund appropriated specifically to redeem it. "This Currency, as we manage it," he said, "is a wonderful Machine. It performs its Office when we issue it; it pays and clothes Troops, and provides Victuals and Ammunition; and when we are obliged to issue a Quantity excessive, it pays itself off by Depreciation." The paper he subsequently wrote to Thomas Ruston had really operated as a tax, and was perhaps the most equal of all taxes, since it depreciated in the hands of holders of money, and thereby taxed them in proportion to the sums they held and the time they held them, which generally was in proportion to men's wealth.

All this, of course, was but making the best of a *pis-aller*. Franklin in a sense held a brief for paper money all his life, because, during almost his whole life, his country had to put up with paper money, whether she wanted to do so or not. When the Revolutionary War was over, he could be less of an advocate, and more of a judge with respect to such money; and the change is neatly illustrated in the words that he wrote from Philadelphia to the Duc de la

Rochefoucauld in 1787. "Paper money in moderate quantities has been found beneficial; when more than the occasions of commerce require, it depreciated and was mischievous; and the populace are apt to demand more than is necessary."

To see at once how quickly Franklin could evade the danger, lurking in the proposition, urged by John Adams upon Vergennes, that the subjects of King Louis were as fairly amenable to the will of Congress, in reducing the value of paper money in their hands to one part in forty, as the Americans themselves, and yet how perfectly Franklin understood the workings of a depreciated paper currency, we need but turn to a letter from him to M. Le Veillard dated Feb. 17, 1788.

Where there is a free government [he said in this letter] and the people make their own laws by their representatives, I see no injustice in their obliging one another to take their own paper money. It is no more so than compelling a man by law to take his own note. But it is unjust to pay strangers with such money against their will. The making of paper money with such a sanction is however a folly, since, although you may by law oblige a citizen to take it for his goods, you cannot fix his prices; and his liberty of rating them as he pleases, which is the same thing as setting what value he pleases on your money, defeats your sanction.

Franklin was a free-trader, but his opinions with regard to import duties are sometimes streaked with Protectionist reasoning. All the natural leanings of such a broad-minded man were, it almost goes without saying, in favor of unrestricted commerce. His general attitude towards commercial restrictions was emphatically expressed in one of his letters to Peter Collinson from which we have already quoted.

In time perhaps [he said] Mankind may be wise enough to let Trade take its own Course, find its own Channels, and regulate its own Proportions, etc. At present, most of the

Edicts of Princes, Placaerts, Laws & Ordinances of Kingdoms & States for that purpose, prove political Blunders. The Advantages they produce not being *general* for the Commonwealth; but *particular*, to private Persons or Bodies in the State who procur'd them, and *at the Expence of the rest of the People.*

Many years later, he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan, "The making England entirely a free port would have been the wisest step ever taken for its advantage." In recent years, his *Wail of a Protected Manufacturer* has been reprinted and widely circulated in England by the opponents of the Fair Trade movement:

Suppose a country, X, which has three industries—cloth, silk, iron—and supplies three other countries—A, B, and C—therewith, wishes to increase the sale and raise the price of cloth in favour of its cloth-makers.

To that end X prohibits the importation of cloth from A.

In retaliation A prohibits silks coming from X.

The workers in silk complain of the decline in their trade.

To satisfy them X excludes silk from B.

B, to retaliate, shuts out iron and hardware against X.

Then the makers of iron and hardware cry out that their trades are being ruined.

So X closes its doors against iron and hardware from C.

In return C refuses to take cloth from X.

Who is the gainer by all these prohibitions?

Answer

All the four countries have diminished their common fund of the enjoyments and conveniences of life.

The open ports of the United States, after the conclusion of the American Revolution, were a source of keen gratification to Franklin. They had brought in, he thought, a vast plenty of foreign goods, and occasioned a demand for domestic produce; so that America enjoyed the double advantage of buying what they consumed cheap, and of selling what they could spare dear.

The following views in a letter from him to Jared Eliot, as far back as the year 1747, sound like a recent tariff reform speech in Congress:

First, I imagine that the Five Per Cent Duty on Goods imported from your Neighbouring Governments, tho' paid at first Hand by the Importer, will not upon the whole come out of his Pocket, but be paid in Fact by the Consumer; for the Importer will be sure to sell his Goods as much dearer as to reimburse himself; so that it is only another Mode of Taxing your own People tho' perhaps meant to raise Money on your Neighbours.

But then follows what a free trader, using Franklin's own coarse phrase, might call "spitting in the soup." "Yet, if you can make some of the Goods, heretofore imported, among yourselves, the advanc'd price of five per cent may encourage your own Manufacture, and in time make the Importation of such Articles unnecessary, which will be an Advantage."

In another place, he employed language in harmony with the importance that the Protectionist assigns to his favorite system as a means of building up local markets for the produce of the farmer.[1] It may be truly said, however, as has already been hinted, that Franklin was never more friendly to the principle of international free trade than in the latter years of his life. In his letter to Le Veillard of Feb. 17, 1788, he used language which demonstrates that he was still convinced that import

[1] "Here in England," Franklin wrote to Humphrey Marshall on Apr. 22, 1771, "it is well known and understood, that whenever a Manufacture is established which employs a Number of Hands, it raises the Value of Lands in the neighbouring Country all around it; partly by the greater Demand near at hand for the produce of the Land; and partly from the Plenty of Money drawn by the Manufacturers to that part of the Country. It seems therefore the Interest of all our Farmers and Owners of Lands, to encourage our Young Manufactures in preference to foreign ones imported among us from distant Countries."

duties are paid by the consumer, and in an earlier letter to Robert R. Livingston in 1783 he said that he felt inclined to believe that a State, which left all her ports open to all the world, upon equal terms, would, by that means, have foreign commodities cheaper, sell its own productions dearer and be on the whole the most prosperous.

For export duties, he had a fierce contempt. "To lay duties on a commodity exported, which our neighbours want," he wrote to James Lovell in 1778, "is a knavish attempt to get something for nothing. The statesman who first invented it had the genius of a pickpocket, and would have been a pickpocket if fortune had suitably placed him."

How thoroughly Franklin understood the principles, which regulate the ebb and flow of population, we have had occasion to note.

With equal intelligence, he laid bare the pauperizing effect of aid injudiciously extended to the poor in too generous a measure. Commenting in his essay on the Laboring Poor on the liberal provision, made for indigence in England, he said:

> I fear the giving mankind a dependance on anything for support, in age or sickness, besides industry and frugality during youth and health, tends to flatter our natural indolence, to encourage idleness and prodigality, and thereby to promote and increase poverty, the very evil it was intended to cure; thus multiplying beggars instead of diminishing them.

In his essay, Franklin makes the interesting statement that the condition of the poor in England was by far the best in Europe; "for that," he adds, "except in England and her American colonies, there is not in any country of the known world, not even in Scotland or Ireland, a provision by law to enforce a support of the poor. Everywhere else necessity reduces to beggary." The whole essay is a highly ingenious argument to the effect that it is

a misconception to think of a rich man as the sole possessor of his wealth, and that in one way or another the laboring poor have the usufruct of the entire clear income of all the property owners in the community. Nobody knew better than Poor Richard that no help is worth speaking of save that which promotes self-help.

The support of the poor [he wrote to Richard Jackson] should not be by maintaining them in idleness, but by employing them in some kind of labour suited to their abilities of body, as I am informed begins to be of late the practice in many parts of England, where workhouses are erected for that purpose. If these were general, I should think the poor would be more careful, and work voluntarily to lay up something for themselves against a rainy day, rather than run the risk of being obliged to work at the pleasure of others for a bare subsistence, and that too under confinement.

For Agriculture, Franklin always had an appreciative word. "Agriculture," he observed in a letter to Cadwallader Evans, "is truly *productive of new wealth;* manufacturers only change forms, and, whatever value they give to the materials they work upon, they in the meantime consume an equal value in provisions, &c."

His other observations on Agriculture are worthy of being read for the light that they cast on his own character, if for no other reason. It is, he declared, in a letter to Jonathan Shipley, "the most useful, the most independent, and therefore the noblest of Employments." Another remark of his in his *Positions to be Examined, Concerning National Wealth* is that there seemed to him but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth:

The first is by *war*, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors. This is *robbery*. The second by *commerce*, which is *generally* cheating. The third by *agriculture*, the only *honest way*, wherein man receives a real increase

of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favour, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry.

The same spirit gives life to the following observations too in his essay on "The Internal State of America": "The Agriculture and Fisheries of the United States are the great Sources of our Encreasing Wealth. He that puts a Seed into the Earth is recompens'd, perhaps, by receiving twenty out of it; and he who draws a Fish out of our Waters, draws up a Piece of Silver."

In Franklin's time as now there was a feeling that the farmer did not receive his full share of the blessings of organized society. In his *Price of Corn, and Management of the Poor*, he makes a farmer say, "I am one of that class of people, that feeds you all, and at present is abused by you all. In short I am a *farmer*."

Franklin's views about punishment were also conspicuously worthy of his kind heart and sound sense. His letter to Benjamin Vaughan on the Criminal Laws is one of his best essays, and merited the honor conferred on it by Samuel Romilly, when he added it in the form of an appendix to his own observations on *Dr. Madan's Thoughts on Executive Justice*. In the course of his feeling exposures of existing fallacies with respect to the philosophy of punishment, Franklin, who did not scruple to say that there would be less crime, if there were no criminal laws, asked these searching questions:

I see, in the last Newspaper from London, that a Woman is capitally convicted at the Old Bailey, for privately stealing out of a Shop some Gauze, value 14 Shillings and three pence; is there any Proportion between the Injury done by a Theft, value 14/3, and the Punishment of a human Creature, by Death, on a Gibbet? Might not that Woman, by her Labour, have made the Reparation ordain'd by God, in paying fourfold? Is not all Punishment inflicted beyond the Merit of the Offence,

so much Punishment of Innocence? In this light, how vast is the annual Quantity of not only *injured*, but *suffering* Innocence, in almost all the civilized States of Europe!

That Franklin was opposed to imprisonment for debt it is hardly necessary to say. His sense of humor, if nothing else, was sufficient to point out to him the absurdity of depriving a debtor of all means of earning money until he earned enough to satisfy his creditors. John Baynes, in his Journal, informs us that, in a conversation with him, Franklin expressed his disapprobation of "this usage" in very strong terms. He said he could not compare any sum of money with imprisonment—they were not commensurable quantities.

Both slavery and the slave trade were held by Franklin in just reprobation, but his views on these subjects, it must be confessed, would be weightier, if he had not trafficked at one time in slaves himself. As it is, he occupies somewhat the same equivocal position as that which inspired Thomas Moore to pen the blackguard lines in which he pictured the American slaveholding patriot as dreaming of Freedom in his bondmaid's arms.[1] The economic truth, however, of what he had to say about Slave Labor in his essay on "The Increase of Mankind" is undeniable.

Tis an ill-grounded Opinion [he declared] that by the Labour of slaves, *America* may possibly vie in Cheapness of Manufactures with *Britain*. The Labour of Slaves here can never be so cheap here as the Labour of working Men is in *Britain*. Anyone may compute it. Interest of Money is in the Colonies from 6 to 10 per Cent. Slaves one with another cost 30£ Sterling per Head. Reckon then the Interest of the first Purchase of a Slave, the Insurance or Risque on his Life, his

[1] The patriot, fresh from Freedom's Councils come,
Now pleas'd retires to lash his slaves at home;
Or woo, perhaps, some black Aspasia's charms,
And dream of freedom in his bondsmaid's arms.
To Thomas Hume, Esq., M.D.
From the City of Washington.

Cloathing and Diet, Expences in his Sickness and Loss of Time, Loss by his Neglect of Business (Neglect is natural to the Man who is not to be benefited by his own Care or Diligence), Expence of a Driver to keep him at Work, and his Pilfering from Time to Time, almost every Slave being *by Nature* a Thief, and compare the whole Amount with the Wages of a Manufacturer of Iron or Wool in *England*, you will see that Labour is much cheaper there than it ever can be by Negroes here.

In this essay, the introduction of slaves is enumerated as one of the causes that diminish the growth of white population.

The Negroes brought into the *English* Sugar *Islands* [he says] have greatly diminish'd the Whites there; the Poor are by this Means deprived of Employment, while a few Families acquire vast Estates; which they spend on Foreign Luxuries, and educating their Children in the Habit of those Luxuries; the same Income is needed for the Support of one that might have maintain'd 100. The Whites who have Slaves, not labouring, are enfeebled, and therefore not so generally prolific; the Slaves being work'd too hard, and ill fed, their Constitutions are broken, and the Deaths among them are more than the Births; so that a continual Supply is needed from *Africa*. The Northern Colonies, having few Slaves, increase in Whites. Slaves also pejorate the Families that use them; the white Children become proud, disgusted with Labour, and being educated in Idleness, are rendered unfit to get a Living by Industry.[1]

[1] By his will Franklin released his son-in-law from the payment of a bond for £2172, 5*s*, with the request that he would immediately after the death of the testator set free "his negro man Bob."

CHAPTER IV

Franklin as a Man of Science

FRANKLIN, as we have said, was primarily a man of action. If we do not always think of him as deeply involved in what Goethe calls "being's ocean, action's storm," it is only because he moved from appointed task to appointed task with such frictionless self-command and ease. But, throughout his life, his mind was quick to make excursions into the domain of philosophical speculation and experiment, whenever business cares or political responsibilities allowed it to do so. Poor Richard would seem to have little in common with Prometheus, but Prometheus, if Condorcet is to be believed, as well as Poor Richard, Franklin was; to say nothing of other transmigrations. That his interest in natural phenomena began at a very early age, is disclosed by his *Journal of a Voyage from London to Philadelphia* in 1726, when he was in his twenty-first year. Throughout the course of this voyage, his faculties were intently concentrated upon all the marvels of the sea and its setting. With sedulous minuteness, he registers the state of the winds each day, and records the impression made on him by every object with a secret at its heart, to be plucked out by an inquisitive mind. A lunar rainbow, an eclipse of the sun, which darkened ten twelfths of his disk, an eclipse of the moon, which spread over six digits of her surface, dolphins in their bright mail of mixed green, silver and

gold, a shark moving around the ship in a slow, majestic manner, and attended by an obsequious retinue of pilot fish, schools of harried flying fish, groups of young crabs, clinging to seaweeds, with indented leaves about three quarters of an inch long, and small yellow berries filled with nothing but wind, a white, tropical bird, said never to be seen further north than latitude 40, and marked by short wings and a single tail feather, other birds, too near the western continent not to be Americans, are among the things that the open-eyed and thoughtful youth jotted down in his Journal in terms that plainly enough indicated not only the eager curiosity but the exactitude of a future man of science. As almost always, the child was but the father of the man. Upon each of his subsequent six voyages across the Atlantic, Franklin exhibited the same, though severer, and more practised, vigilance in observing everything that the ocean, including the instruments of commerce afloat on it, have for a penetrating and suggestive intelligence. How essentially he was a man of science, is demonstrated by the fact that, whenever he was on the element, where alone he could hope for exemption from the political demands of his countrymen, his intellect turned at once with ardor to the study of Nature. Old and feeble as he was, he wrote no less than three valuable dissertations on his last voyage across the Atlantic, one on the causes and cure of smoky chimneys, one on his smoke-consuming stove, and a third, distinguished by an extraordinary wealth of knowledge and observation, on the construction, equipment and provisioning of ships, and the winds, currents and temperature of the sea; which was accompanied by valuable thermometric tables, based upon observations made by him during three of his transatlantic voyages. The maritime essay was written with the closest regard to detail, and contains such a mass of information and luminous comment as has rarely been condensed into the same space. It makes up some

thirty-four quarto pages of Smyth's edition of Franklin's works, exclusive of the thermometric notes. The other two essays occupy some forty-nine pages more. All three are elucidated by numerous explanatory charts and illustrations, and are marked by the mastery of scientific principles, which no mere artificer or artisan could have displayed in discussing such topics; but, at the same time, they could not have been more intensely practical, as respects minutiæ of construction, if Franklin had been a professional sailor, mason or stove-maker. The maritime observations range from the Chinese method of dividing the hulls of vessels into separate compartments, which is now regarded as one of the most efficient devices for securing the safety of ocean greyhounds, to an inquiry into the reason why fowls served up at sea are usually too tough to be readily masticated and the best means of dishing soup on a rolling and pitching vessel.

After his return in his youth from London to Philadelphia, Franklin was for a long time too much immersed in business and civic projects to give much attention to natural phenomena. "Why does the flame of a candle tend upward in a spire?", "whence comes the dew, that stands on the outside of a tankard that has cold water in it in the summer time?", are among the few questions of a scientific nature that he appears to have framed for the discussions of the Junto; and they are elementary enough. But with the coming of pecuniary ease, the natural bent of his mind soon asserted itself. While in Boston in 1746, he happened to see some electrical experiments performed by a Dr. Spence, who had recently arrived from Scotland. They were clumsily conducted, but crude as they were, they filled his mind with mixed sensations of surprise and delight; so much so that, when, shortly after his return to Philadelphia from Boston, the Library Company found itself the owner of a glass tube, for the production of electricity by friction, given to it by Peter Collinson,

then a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, with instructions for its use, he eagerly availed himself of Collinson's generosity to repeat the experiments that he had witnessed at Boston, and, by continuous practice, became very expert in making them as well as others. Indeed, his house was soon overrun to such an extent with eager visitors that he was compelled in self-defence to relieve it of its congestion by supplying some of his friends with similar tubes blown at the Philadelphia glass-house. One of these friends was his ingenious neighbor, Kinnersley, who chanced at the time to be out of business. Franklin advised him to exhibit the experiments for profit, and followed up the advice by preparing two lectures for him, in which the details of the experiments were clearly set forth. Kinnersley himself employed skilled workmen to make the necessary electrical apparatus for him, modelled upon the rough agencies designed by Franklin for himself, and used in his own exhibitions. The lectures, when delivered by him in Philadelphia, were so well attended that he made a tour of all the chief towns of the Colonies with a considerable degree of pecuniary success. Some years later, similar instructions given by Franklin to Domien, a Greek priest, proved so useful to him on a long tramp that he wrote to his benefactor that he had lived eight hundred miles upon electricity, and that it had been meat, drink and clothing to him. When Franklin last heard from him, he was contemplating a journey from Havana to Vera Cruz, thence through Mexico to Acapulco, on its western coast, and from Acapulco to Manila, and from Manila through China, India, Persia and Turkey to his home in Transylvania; all with electricity as his main *viaticum*.

Franklin's own experiments fortunately ended in something better than vagabondage, however respectable or profitable. Grateful to Collinson for his timely gifts, he wrote to him several letters, laying before him the results of the Philadelphia experiments. Collinson procured for

these letters the privilege of being read before the Royal Society, where they did not excite enough notice to be printed among its Transactions. Another letter, one to Kinnersley, in which Franklin propounded the identity of lightning and electricity, he sent to Dr. Mitchell, an acquaintance of his, and also a member of the Royal Society, who replied by telling him that it had been read before the Society, but had been laughed at by the connoisseurs. Then it was that the happy obstetric suggestion of Dr. Fothergill that the letters were of too much value to be stifled led Collinson to gather them together for publication by Cave in the *Gentleman's Magazine.* They were not published in this magazine, but Cave did bring them out in pamphlet form with a preface by Dr. Fothergill. The event showed that he and the general public had more acumen than the sages of the Royal Society, for the letters, when subsequently published in a quarto volume, with additions by Franklin, ran through five editions, without the cost of a penny to Cave for copyright. It was from France, however, that they first received the full meed of prompt approbation that they deserved. A copy of them happened to fall into the hands of Buffon, who prevailed upon D'Alibard to translate them into French. Their publication in that language provoked an attack upon them by the Abbé Nollet, Preceptor in Natural Philosophy to the Royal Family, and the author of a popular theory of Electricity. At first, the Abbé could not believe that America was capable of producing such letters, and insisted that they must have been fabricated at Paris for the purpose of discrediting his system. In fact, he even doubted whether there was such a person as Franklin, but, afterwards, being convinced upon that point, he published a volume of letters, mainly addressed to Franklin, in which he defended his own theory, and denied the accuracy of Franklin's experiments and conclusions. Le Roy, of the Royal Academy of

Sciences, rejoined on behalf of Franklin, who had decided to let the truth be its own champion, and easily refuted the Abbé. The papers could not have asked for a better advertisement than this controversy. They were further translated into the Italian, German and Latin languages, and Franklin's theory of electricity was so generally adopted by the learned men of Europe, in preference to that of the Abbé, that the latter lived, Franklin tells us, to see himself the last of his sect, except Monsieur B. of Paris, his *élève* and immediate disciple. It is surprising that even the solitary *élève* should have been left clinging to his master; for, in the meantime, the most momentous experiment, suggested by Franklin in his letters, had been performed, substantially in the manner outlined by him, with brilliant success, by D'Alibard, on a hill at Marly-la-Ville, where a pointed rod of iron, forty feet high, and planted on an electric stand, had been erected for the purpose of carrying it into execution. When a thunder-cloud passed over the rod on May 10, 1752, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the persons, set by D'Alibard to watch it, had drawn near "and attracted from it sparks of fire, perceiving the same kind of commotions as in the common electrical experiments." A week later, the fire and crackling sound, elicited by M. de Lor from a rod, erected at his house in Paris on a cake of resin, and electrified by a cloud between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, told the same story. He had previously performed what he called the "Philadelphia experiments" in the presence of Louis XV., who seems to have been as much delighted with them as if they had been a new mistress. In a short time, they became so popular that we are told by Franklin that "all the curious of Paris flocked to see them." One of the results of the fame acquired by him in France was a letter written by Dr. Wright, an English physician, then in Paris, to a member of the Royal Society, apprising the latter of the excitement that the experiments had created

in France, and expressing his astonishment that Franklin's papers had been so little noticed in England. Quickened by Dr. Wright's words, the Society reconsidered the letters which had been read before them, and caused an abstract of them and the other letters on electricity, sent to England by Franklin, to be printed among its Transactions. Afterwards, when several members of the Society had themselves drawn down lightning from the clouds, it elected Franklin a member, and, in view of the fact that the honor had not been sought by him, voted that he "was not to pay anything"; which meant that he was to be liable for neither admission fee nor annual dues, and was even to receive his copy of the Transactions of the Society free of charge. Nor did it stop here. It also awarded to Franklin, for the year 1753, the Copley gold medal, accompanied by an address, in which Lord Macclesfield, its President, endeavored to make full amends to him for its belated recognition of the value of his discoveries.

The suggestion by Franklin, which led to the experiments of D'Alibard and De Lor, is as matter-of-fact as a cooking recipe.

To determine the question [he said in a letter to Peter Collinson] whether the clouds that contain lightning are electrified or not, I would propose an experiment to be try'd where it may be done conveniently. On the top of some high tower or steeple, place a kind of centry box, . . . big enough to contain a man and an electrical stand. From the middle of the stand let an iron rod rise and pass bending out of the door, and then upright 20 or 30 feet, pointed very sharp at the end. If the electrical stand be kept clean and dry, a man standing on it when such clouds are passing low, might be electrified and afford sparks, the rod drawing fire to him from a cloud. If any danger to the man should be apprehended (though I think there would be none), let him stand on the floor of his box, and now and then bring near to the rod the loop of a wire that has one end fastened to the leads, he holding it by a wax

handle; so the sparks, if the rod is electrified, will strike from the rod to the wire, and not affect him.

Before the news of the success achieved by D'Alibard and De Lor reached Franklin, he himself had conducted a similar experiment "though made in a different and more easy manner." This experiment has become one of the veriest commonplaces of physical science. It was performed, when a thunder gust was coming on, in a field near Philadelphia, with such simple materials as a silk kite, topped off with a foot or more of sharp pointed wire, and controlled by a twine string, equipped with a key for casting off the electric sparks, and ending in a silk ribbon to secure the safety of the hand that held it. The whole construction is set out in a letter written to Collinson by Franklin shortly after the incident, in which, with his usual modesty, the latter describes the kite as if he had had nothing to do with it. Something like the feelings of Sir Isaac Newton, when the falling apple brought to his ear the real music of the spheres, must have been those of Franklin, when the loose filaments of twine bristled up stiffly, as if stirred by some violated instinct of wild freedom, and the stream of sparks from the key told him that he was right in supposing that the mysterious and appalling agency, which had for centuries been associated in the human mind with the resistless wrath of Omnipotence, was but the same subtle fluid that had so often lit up his electrical apparatus with its playful corruscations.

The letters to Collinson contained another suggestion almost equally pregnant. Speaking of the power of pointed conductors to draw off electricity noiselessly and harmlessly, Franklin asked,

> May not the knowledge of this power of points be of use to mankind, in preserving houses, churches, ships, &c. from the stroke of lightning, by directing us to fix on the highest parts of

those edifices, upright rods of iron made sharp as a needle, and gilt to prevent rusting, and from the foot of those rods a wire down the outside of the building into the ground, or down round one of the shrouds of a ship, and down her side till it reaches the water? Would not these pointed rods probably draw the electrical fire silently out of a cloud before it came nigh enough to strike, and thereby secure us from that most sudden and terrible mischief?

The suggestion was but slowly adopted, not in Europe, indeed, at all, until the efficacy of the lightning rod in protecting buildings had been generally recognized in America. In time, however, the device came into use both in Great Britain and on the Continent; Voltaire being one of the first persons in Geneva to erect one, and, wherever it was erected, it helped to confirm the fame of Franklin by its silent effect upon the human imagination. In recent years, the lightning rod, once in almost universal use in America, has fallen into neglect, but the explanation of this fact is to be found not in any just doubts about its utility, when properly constructed, affixed and grounded, but in the growth of fire insurance, and the inutility, or danger, of such rods, if carelessly set in place.[1]

The domestication of lightning and the invention of the lightning rod were the two things to which Franklin was principally indebted for his brilliant reputation as a philosopher. At this day, the application of electricity to common uses is so familiar to us that it is hard, without a little reflection, to realize how well calculated his electri-

[1] The lightning rod in its origin encountered the same religious misgivings as inoculation and insurance and many other ideas which have promoted human progress and happiness. The Rev. Thomas Prince at the time of the Lisbon earthquake thought that the more lightning rods there were the greater was the danger that the earth might become perilously surcharged with electricity. "In Boston," he said, "are more erected than anywhere else in New England; and Boston seems to be more dreadfully shaken. Oh! there is no getting out of the Mighty Hand of God! If we think to avoid it in the Air we can not in the Earth. Yea, it may grow more fatal."

cal achievements were to send a thrill of astonishment and awe through the human mind. Of all the manifestations of the physical world, lightning with its inscrutable, swift, and all but irresistible, stroke, followed by the sublime detonations of thunder, is the one most suggestive of supernatural influence exerted by an all-powerful deity. The mythological dreams of the Greeks, the visions of the Old Testament, the simple emotions of the savage had all paid their homage of dread to the fearful force—like a madman pitilessly destructive, and yet like a madman diverted from its rage by the barest trifle—which had clothed Jove with the greater part of his grandeur, licked up even the water that was in the trench about the altar, built by Elijah in the name of the Lord, and filled the breast of the Indian with superstitious terror. Discovery, that laid bare the real nature and destructive limits of this force, could not fail to excite an extraordinary degree of attention everywhere. It was the singular fortune of Franklin, though a practical, sober-minded denizen of the earth, if ever man was, to have enjoyed in his day a reputation not unlike that of a divinity of the upper ether.[1] It so happens that the atmosphere was, in one way or another, the home of all the scientific problems which engaged his interest most deeply. His philosophical Pegasus, so little akin to the humble brute bestrid by Poor Richard, was "a beast for Perseus—pure air and fire"; and especially, it is needless to say, was this true of his relations to the lightning. When the fact became known throughout the civilized world that human ingenuity had succeeded in even snaring it, Franklin was exalted

[1] The lines under the portrait of Franklin by Cochin do not hesitate to exalt him above the most powerful forces of Nature and the authority of the Gods:

"C'est l'honneur et l'appui du nouvel hémisphère,
Les flots de l'Océan s'abaissent à sa voix;
Il réprime ou dirige à son gré le tonnerre.
Qui désarme les dieux peut-il craindre les rois?"

for a time to a seat on Olympus. All the literature of the period, as well as that of a much later period, bears out the statement that rarely has any single, peaceful incident ever so fired the human imagination.[1] For many years, the natural background for a portrait of Franklin might have been a bank of cloud lit up by the incessant play of summer lightning. *Eripuit coelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis*, was but the mightiest of the electrical discharges that flattery poured upon him. Turn where we may to the poetry of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and of the earlier part of the nineteenth, whether epigram or otherwise, we are likely to come upon some imprint left upon the thought of those periods by the subjugation of lightning.

The interest of Franklin in electrical science was but another sequel of the world-wide avidity with which learned men had recently turned to the study of that subject. One of them, Grey, had pursued a series of experiments for the purpose of determining the relative conductivity of various substances, another, Du Fay, had erroneously classified electricity as resinous and vitreous, and the perfected Leyden Jar particularly had given a new momentum to the progress of electrical investigation. Into this movement, after witnessing Dr. Spence's awkward experiments at Boston, Franklin threw himself with the utmost

[1] "With Franklin grasp the lightning's fiery wing," is a line in Thomas Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*. In his *Age of Bronze*, Byron asks in one place why the Atlantic should "gird a tyrant's grave"

> "While Franklin's quiet memory climbs to heaven,
> Calming the lightning which he thence hath riven."

And in another place in the same poem he speaks of

> "Stoic Franklin's energetic shade,
> Robed in the lightnings which his hand allayed."

Crabbe in his tribute to "Divine Philosophy" in the *Library* exclaims,

> "'Tis hers the lightning from the clouds to call,
> And teach the fiery mischief where to fall."

enthusiasm, and his discovery of the identity of lightning and electricity and his lightning-rod conception were but the chief fruits of this enthusiasm. Between the *Autobiography* and his letters, we are at no loss to follow closely the steps by which he reached all the results which have given him such a high position as an electrical investigator. "I purchased all Dr. Spence's apparatus . . ." he tells us in the *Autobiography*, "and I proceeded in my electrical experiments with great alacrity." How keen this alacrity became, after he had been rubbing for a time the glass tube, sent over to Philadelphia by Collinson, may be seen in what he wrote to Collinson himself on March 28, 1747:

> For my own part, I never was before engaged in any study that so totally engrossed my attention and my time as this has lately done; for what with making experiments when I can be alone, and repeating them to my Friends and Acquaintance, who, from the novelty of the thing, come continually in crouds to see them, I have, during some months past, had little leisure for anything else.

The result of this experimentation was the various letters to Collinson and others that constitute Franklin's highest claim to distinction as a man of science. By following them in their chronological order, the reader can trace with little difficulty the genesis of each of his more valuable conclusions touching electricity. They are distinguished by remarkable simplicity and force of reasoning and by a clearness of statement as transparent as crystal. Moreover, they are even enlivened at times by gleams of fancy or humor. In a word they indisputably merit the judgment that Sir Humphry Davy, no mean judge of style as well as scientific truth, passes upon them:

> The style and manner of his publication on electricity are almost as worthy of admiration as the doctrine it contains.

He has endeavoured to remove all mystery and obscurity from the subject. He has written equally for the uninitiated and the philosopher; and he has rendered his details amusing as well as perspicuous, elegant as well as simple. Science appears in his language in a dress wonderfully decorous, the best adapted to display her native loveliness. He has in no instance exhibited that false dignity, by which philosophy is kept aloof from common applications; and he has sought rather to make her a useful inmate and servant in the common habitations of man, than to preserve her merely as an object of admiration in temples and palaces.

While recalling these words, it is not amiss to recall, too, what Lord Brougham had to say about the agencies with which Franklin conducted his experiments.

He could make an experiment [said Brougham] with less apparatus and conduct his experimental inquiry to a discovery with more ordinary materials than any other philosopher we ever saw. With an old key, a silk thread, some sealing wax and a sheet of paper he discovered the identity of lightning and electricity.

The truth of these observations is strikingly instanced in a story told of Franklin in Pettigrew's *Life of Lettsom*. When Henry Smeathman was insisting that the flight of birds is on inclined planes, and that they could not fly at all, but would simply float with the wind, if they were not heavier than the air, Franklin launched half a sheet of paper obliquely into the air, observing, as he watched its course, that that was an evident proof of the propriety of Smeathman's doctrines.

In a letter to Collinson, dated July 11, 1747, Franklin communicated to him the earliest results of his experimental use of the glass tube that Collinson had sent over to Philadelphia. The first phenomenon, which fixed his attention, was the wonderful effect of pointed bodies in drawing off the electrical fire. This was the lightning rod

in its protoplasmal stage. The manner in which he described the experiment, by which this particular truth was demonstrated, is a good specimen of his remarkable faculty for simple and clear statement:

Place an iron shot of three or four inches diameter on the mouth of a clean dry glass bottle. By a fine silken thread from the ceiling, right over the mouth of the bottle, suspend a small cork ball, about the bigness of a marble; the thread of such a length, as that the cork ball may rest against the side of the shot. Electrify the shot, and the ball will be repelled to the distance of four or five inches, more or less, according to the quantity of Electricity. When in this state, if you present to the shot the point of a long slender sharp bodkin, at six or eight inches distance, the repellency is instantly destroy'd, and the cork flies to the shot. A blunt body must be brought within an inch, and draw a spark, to produce the same effect. To prove that the electrical fire is *drawn off* by the point, if you take the blade of the bodkin out of the wooden handle, and fix it in a stick of sealing wax, and then present it at the distance aforesaid, or if you bring it very near, no such effect follows; but sliding one finger along the wax till you touch the blade, and the ball flies to the shot immediately. If you present the point in the dark, you will see, sometimes at a foot distance, and more, a light gather upon it, like that of a fire-fly, or glowworm; the less sharp the point, the nearer you must bring it to observe the light; and, at whatever distance you see the light, you may draw off the electrical fire, and destroy the repellency. If a cork ball so suspended be repelled by the tube, and a point be presented quick to it, tho' at a considerable distance, 'tis surprizing to see how suddenly it flies back to the tube. Points of wood will do near as well as those of iron, provided the wood is not dry; but perfectly dry wood will no more conduct electricity than sealing-wax.

The repellency between the ball and the shot was likewise destroyed, Franklin stated, 1, by sifting fine sand on it; this did it gradually, 2, by breathing on it, 3, by making a smoke about it from burning wood, and 4, by candle-

light, even though the candle was at a foot distance; these did it suddenly.

The same result was also produced, he found, by the light of a bright coal from a wood fire, or the light of red-hot iron; but not at so great a distance. Such was not the effect, however, he said, of smoke from dry resin dropped on hot iron. It was merely attracted by both shot and cork ball, forming proportionable atmospheres round them, making them look beautifully, somewhat like some of the figures in Burnet's or Whiston's *Theory of the Earth.*

Franklin also noted the fact that, unlike fire-light, sun-light, when thrown on both cork and shot, did not impair the repellency between them in the least.

In the same letter, guided by the belief that he had formed that electricity is not created by friction but, except when accumulated or depleted by special causes, is equally diffused through material substances generally, he also reached the conclusion that electrical discharges are due to circuits set up by substances that offer little resistance to the transit of the electrical current between bodies charged with more than the ordinary quantity of electrical energy and bodies not in that condition. In other words, electricity is always alert to restore its equilibrium when lost, and, if accumulated beyond its normal measure in one body, seeks with violent eagerness, as soon as a favorable medium of transmission is presented to it, to pass on its surplus of electrical energy to another body less amply supplied.

These conceptions, too, which lie at the very foundations of modern electrical science, are illustrated by Franklin with extraordinary simplicity and clearness as follows:

1. A person standing on wax, and rubbing the tube, and another person on wax drawing the fire, they will both of them, (provided they do not stand so as to touch one another) appear

to be electrised, to a person standing on the floor; that is, he will perceive a spark on approaching each of them with his knuckle.

2. But, if the persons on wax touch one another during the exciting of the tube, neither of them will appear to be electrised.

3. If they touch one another after exciting the tube, and drawing the fire as aforesaid, there will be a stronger spark between them, than was between either of them and the person on the floor.

4. After such strong spark, neither of them discover any electricity.

These appearances we attempt to account for thus: We suppose, as aforesaid, that electrical fire is a common element, of which every one of the three persons above mentioned has his equal share, before any operation is begun with the tube. A, who stands on wax and rubs the tube, collects the electrical fire from himself into the glass; and his communication with the common stock being cut off by the wax, his body is not again immediately supply'd. B, (who stands on wax likewise) passing his knuckle along near the tube, receives the fire which was collected by the glass from A; and his communication with the common stock being likewise cut off, he retains the additional quantity received. To C, standing on the floor, both appear to be electrised: for he having only the middle quantity of electrical fire, receives a spark upon approaching B, who has an over quantity; but gives one to A, who has an under quantity. If A and B approach to touch each other, the spark is stronger, because the difference between them is greater: After such touch there is no spark between either of them and C, because the electrical fire in all is reduced to the original equality. If they touch while electrising, the equality is never destroy'd, the fire only circulating. Hence have arisen some new terms among us: We say, B, (and bodies like circumstanced) is electrised *positively;* A, *negatively*. Or rather, B is electrised *plus;* A, *minus*. And we daily in our experiments electrise bodies *plus or minus*, as we think proper. To electrise *plus* or *minus*, no more needs to be known than this, that the parts of the tube or sphere that

are rubbed, do, in the instant of the friction, attract the electrical fire, and therefore take it from the thing rubbing: The same parts immediately, as the friction upon them ceases, are disposed to give the fire they have received, to anybody that has less. Thus you may circulate it, as Mr. *Watson* has shown; you may also accumulate or subtract it upon, or from anybody, as you connect that body with the rubber or with the receiver, the communication with the common stock being cut off.

The same letter recounts some of the tricks that Franklin and his fellow-experimenters were in the habit of making their new plaything perform. They fired spirits, lit candles just blown out, mimicked lightning, produced sparks with the touch of the finger, on the human hand or face, and gave electrical kisses. Other feats consisted in animating an artificial spider in such a way as to keep him oscillating in a very lifelike and entertaining manner between two wires, and lighting up the gilding on the covers of a book with a brilliant flash. This letter also shows that the provincial philosophers had already made improvements in the usual electrical methods. They had found that it was better to fill the phial with granulated lead than with water because of the superior facility with which the former could be warmed, and kept warm and dry in a damp place. They rubbed their tubes with buckskin, and, by observing certain precautions, such as never sullying the tubes by handling them, and keeping them in tight, close-fitting cases of pasteboard, lined with flannel, increased their efficiency. Their spheres for charging phials with electricity were mounted on iron axes with a small handle on one end, with which they could be set revolving like a common grindstone. It was in this same letter that Franklin with his usual generosity was careful to state that the power of pointed bodies to throw off as well as draw off the electrical fire was a discovery of his friend Hopkinson, and that the

revolving sphere used by them was the invention of his friend Syng. About a month later, Franklin wrote to Collinson that, in the course of further experiments, he had observed several phenomena which made him distrust some of his former conclusions. "If there is no other use discover'd of Electricity," he said, "this however is something considerable, that it may *help to make a vain man humble.*"

Another letter from Franklin to Collinson, written about two weeks later, communicated to him some valuable observations upon "M. Muschenbroeck's wonderful bottle"—the Leyden Jar. This bottle was a mere ordinary bottle, with a common cork in its neck, into which a common wire had been inserted. He wrote that, at the same time that the wire and the top of the bottle were electrised positively or plus, the bottom of the bottle was electrised negatively or minus, in exact proportion; the consequence was that, whatever quantity of electrical fire was thrown in at the top, an equal quantity went out at the bottom until, if the process was kept up long enough, the point was reached in the operation, when no more could be thrown into the upper part of the bottle, because no more could be drawn out of the lower part. If the attempt was made to throw more in, the fire was spewed back through the wire, or flew out in loud cracks through the sides of the bottle.

He also noted that an equilibrium could not be restored in the bottle by inward communication or contact of the parts, but only by a communication, formed without the bottle between its top and bottom.

He also noted that no electrical fire could be thrown into the top of the bottle, when none could get out at its bottom, either because the bottom was too thick, or because it stood on some non-conducting material, and likewise that, when the bottle was electrified, but little of the electrical fire could be drawn from the top by touch-

ing the wire, unless an equal quantity could at the same time get in at the bottom.

So wonderfully [he adds] are these two states of electricity, the *plus* and *minus*, combined and balanced in this miraculous bottle! situated and related to each in a manner that I can by no means comprehend! If it were possible that a bottle should in one part contain a quantity of air strongly comprest, and in another part a perfect vacuum, we know the equilibrium would be instantly restored *within*. But here we have a bottle containing at the same time a *plenum* of electrical fire, and a *vacuum* of the same fire; and yet the equilibrium cannot be restored between them but by a communication without! though the *plenum* presses violently to expand, and the hungry vacuum seems to attract as violently in order to be filled.

The letter concludes with an elaborate statement of the experiments by which the correctness of its conclusions could be established.

Franklin's next discovery communicated to Collinson in a letter dated the succeeding year was that, when the bottle was electrified, the electric fluid resided in the glass itself of the bottle. The manner in which he proved this fact is a good example of his inductive thoroughness.

Purposing [he said] to analyze the electrified bottle, in order to find wherein its strength lay, we placed it on glass, and drew out the cork and wire, which for that purpose had been loosely put in. Then taking the bottle in one hand, and bringing a finger of the other near its mouth, a strong spark came from the water, and the shock was as violent as if the wire had remained in it, which shewed that the force did not lie in the wire. Then, to find if it resided in the water, being crouded into and condensed in it, as confin'd by the glass, which had been our former opinion, we electrified the bottle again, and, placing it on glass, drew out the wire and cork as before; then, taking up the bottle, we decanted all its water into an empty bottle, which likewise stood on glass; and taking up that other bottle, we expected, if the force resided in the

water, to find a shock from it; but there was none. We judged then, that it must either be lost in decanting, or remain in the first bottle. The latter we found to be true; for that bottle on trial gave the shock, though filled up as it stood with fresh unelectrified water from a teapot.

By a similar course of experimentation with sash glass and lead plates, he also demonstrated that the form of the glass in the bottle was immaterial, that the power resided in the glass as glass, and that the non-electrics in contact served only like the armature of a loadstone to unite the force of the several parts, and to bring them at once to any point desired; it being the property of a non-electric that the whole body instantly receives or gives what electric fire is given to, or taken from, anyone of its parts. These experiments suggested the idea of intensifying the application of electrical forces by grouping numerous electrical centres.

We made [he said] what we called an *electrical battery*, consisting of eleven panes of large sash-glass, arm'd with thin leaden plates, pasted on each side, placed vertically, and supported at two inches distance on silk cords, with thick hooks of leaden wire, one from each side, standing upright, distant from each other, and convenient communications of wire and chain, from the giving side of one pane, to the receiving side of the other; that so the whole might be charged together, and with the same labour as one single pane; and another contrivance to bring the giving sides, after charging, in contact with one long wire, and the receivers with another, which two long wires would give the force of all the plates of glass at once through the body of any animal forming the circle with them. The plates may also be discharged separately, or any number together that is required.

When the idea of the electrical battery was formed by him, Franklin was not aware that Smeaton and Bains

had previously assembled panes of glass for the purpose of giving an electrical shock.

At the time that this letter was written, Franklin had added to his electrical exploits that of electrifying a mezzotint of the King in such a manner that, if anyone attempted to take the crown off his head, he would receive a "terrible blow."

> If the picture were highly charged [he said], the consequence might perhaps be as fatal as that of high treason.
>
> The operator [he continues], who holds the picture by the upper end, where the inside of the frame is not gilt, to prevent its falling, feels nothing of the shock, and may touch the face of the picture without danger, which he pretends is a test of his loyalty. If a ring of persons take the shock among them, the experiment is called *The Conspirators*.

Another far more significant exploit was the application of electrical energy in such a way as to set an electrical Jack revolving with such force and swiftness as to carry a spitted fowl around before a fire with a motion fit for roasting.

This wheel was driven by an electrical battery, but Franklin also devised what he called a self-moving wheel that was, by a different electrical method, revolved with so much force and rapidity that he thought that it might be used for the ringing of chimes and the movement of light-made orreries. And after observing that a thin glass bubble, about an inch in diameter, weighing only six grains, being half filled with water, partly gilt on the outside, and furnished with a wire hook, gave, when electrified, as great a shock as a man can well bear, Franklin exclaims, "How great must be the quantity (of electrical fire) in this small portion of glass! It seems as if it were of its very substance and essence. Perhaps if that due quantity of electrical fire so obstinately retained by glass, could be separated from it, it would no longer be

glass; it might lose its transparency, or its brittleness, or its elasticity."

This letter also reaches the conclusion that bodies, having less than the common quantity of electricity, repel each other, as well as those that have none.

It concludes with a lively paragraph:

> Chagrined a little that we have been hitherto able to produce nothing in this way of use to mankind; and the hot weather coming on, when electrical experiments are not so agreeable, it is proposed to put an end to them for this season, somewhat humorously, in a party of pleasure on the banks of *Skuylkil*. Spirits, at the same time, are to be fired by a spark sent from side to side through the river, without any other conductor than the water; an experiment which we some time since performed, to the amazement of many. A turkey is to be killed for our dinner by the *electrical shock*, and roasted by the *electrical jack*, before a fire kindled by the *electrified bottle;* when the healths of all the famous electricians in *England*, *Holland*, *France* and *Germany* are to be drank in *electrified bumpers*, under the discharge of guns from the *electrical* battery.

An electrified bumper, a note to the letter explained, was a small thin glass tumbler, nearly filled with wine, and charged, which, when brought to the lips of a person, gave him a shock, if he was close-shaved, and did not breathe on the liquor. Another note states that the biggest animal that the experimenters had yet killed was a hen.

A later letter to Collinson on the phenomena of thundergusts takes Franklin away from the Leyden Jar of the laboratory to the stupendous batteries of the outer universe—from the point of a bodkin to the lofty natural or artificial objects, upon which lightning descends from the illimitable sky. "As electrified clouds pass over a country," he remarks, "high hills and high trees, lofty towers, spires, masts of ships, chimneys, &c., as so many prominencies and points, draw the electrical fire, and the whole

cloud discharges there." From this observation to the lightning rod was but a short step.

Another letter to Collinson in the succeeding year brings us to the lightning rod in principle if not in name. Speaking of what a sea captain had said of luminous objects, which had settled on the spintles at the topmast heads of his ship before an electrical shock, and burned like very large torches, he says:

> According to my opinion, the electrical fire was then drawing off, as by points, from the cloud; the largeness of the flame betokening the great quantity of electricity in the cloud: and had there been a good wire communication from the spintle heads to the sea, that could have conducted more freely than tarred ropes, or masts of turpentine wood, I imagine there would either have been no stroke; or, if a stroke, the wire would have conducted it all into the sea without damage to the ship.

In the same letter, there is an adumbration of his grandest experiment, when he speaks of the flash from two of his jars as "our mimic lightning."

This letter also shows that with electricity Franklin had frequently imparted polarity to needles and reversed it at pleasure. Wilson, at London, he said, had failed to produce these results because he had tried it on too large masses and with too small force. The letter also evidences the fact that he had employed the electric spark for the practical purpose of firing gunpowder.

Another letter to Collinson dated July 29, 1750, is accompanied by an additional paper on the properties and effects of the Electrical Matter. It acknowledges the debt that Franklin owed to Collinson for the glass tube and the instructions which attended it, and to the Proprietary for the generous present of a complete electrical apparatus which "that bountiful benefactor to our library," as he calls him, had made to it. The telegraph, the Marconi

tower, the telephone, the electric bulb, the electric automobile and the trolley car rise up before us when we read this observation in the paper that accompanied the letter: "The beneficial uses of this electric fluid in the creation, we are not yet well acquainted with, though doubtless such there are, and those very considerable." The paper is the most important that Franklin ever wrote on electricity; containing as it does the two suggestions which, when carried into execution, made his name famous throughout the world, that is to say, his suggestion, already quoted by us at length, that houses, churches and ships might be protected by upright rods of iron, and his suggestion, already quoted by us, too, as to how the identity of lightning and electricity could be established. The point of the bodkin and the electrified shot and ball, and the mimic brightness, agility and fury of the lurking fire in the wonderful bottle had led, step by step, to two of the most splendid conceptions in the early history of electrical science.[1]

With the discovery that electricity and lightning were the same thing, the real achievements of Franklin in the province of electricity came to an end. But he still continued his electrical experiments with undiminished ardor. We find him on one occasion prostrating with a single shock six persons who were so obliging as to lend

[1] The inductive process by which Franklin arrived at the identity of lightning and electricity was set forth in one of his letters to John Lining, of Charleston, dated March 18, 1755. The minutes kept by him of his experiments and observations, contained, he said, the following entry:

"November 7, 1749. Electrical fluid agrees with lightning in these particulars. 1. Giving light. 2. Colour of the light. 3. Crooked direction. 4. Swift motion. 5. Being conducted by metals. 6. Crack or noise in exploding. 7. Subsisting in water or ice. 8. Rending bodies it passes through. 9. Destroying animals. 10. Melting metals. 11. Firing inflammable substances. 12. Sulphureous smell. The electric fluid is attracted by points. We do not know whether this property is in lightning. But since they agree in all particulars wherein we can already compare them, is it not probable they agree likewise in this? Let the Experiment be made."

themselves to the pursuit of scientific truth. Twice he was the victim of his own inadvertence. Speaking of one of these occasions, in a letter to a friend in Boston, he said:

The flash was very great, and the crack as loud as a pistol; yet, my senses being instantly gone, I neither saw the one nor heard the other; nor did I feel the stroke on my hand, though I afterwards found it raised a round swelling where the fire entered, as big as half a pistol-bullet; by which you may judge of the quickness of the electrical fire, which by this instance seems to be greater than that of sound, light, or animal sensation. . . . I then felt what I know not how well to describe; a universal blow throughout my whole body from head to foot, which seemed within as well as without; after which the first thing I took notice of was a violent quick shaking of my body, which gradually remitting, my sense as gradually returned, and then I thought the bottles must be discharged, but could not conceive how, till at last I perceived the chain in my hand, and recollected what I had been about to do. That part of my hand and fingers, which held the chain, was left white, as though the blood had been driven out, and remained so eight or ten minutes after, feeling like dead flesh; and I had a numbness in my arms and the back of my neck, which continued till the next morning, but wore off. Nothing remains now of this shock, but a soreness in my breast-bone, which feels as if it had been bruised. I did not fall, but suppose I should have been knocked down, if I had received the stroke in my head. The whole was over in less than a minute.

On the second occasion, while making ready to give a healing shock to a paralytic, he received a charge through his own head. He did not see the flash, hear the report or feel the stroke.

When my Senses returned [he told Jan Ingenhousz], I found myself on the Floor. I got up, not knowing how that had happened. I then again attempted to discharge the Jars; but one of the Company told me they were already discharg'd,

which I could not at first believe, but on Trial found it true. They told me they had not felt it, but they saw I was knock'd down by it, which had greatly surprised them. On recollecting myself, and examining my Situation, I found the Case clear. A small swelling rose on the Top of my Head, which continued sore for some Days; but I do not remember any other Effect good or bad.

One of Franklin's contemporaries, Professor Richmann, of St. Petersburg, did not fare so well; for a stroke of the lightning that he had allured from the clouds brought his life to an end. Priestley, however, seems to have regarded such a death as a form of euthanasia. At any rate, in speaking of this martyr of science in his *History of Electricity* he terms him "the justly envied Richmann."

After Franklin learned how to impound lightning, his intercourse with electricity was more familiar than ever.

In September, 1752 [he wrote to Collinson], I erected an iron rod to draw the lightning down into my house, in order to make some experiments on it, with two bells to give notice when the rod should be electrify'd: a contrivance obvious to every electrician.

I found the bells rang sometimes when there was no lightning or thunder, but only a dark cloud over the rod; that sometimes, after a flash of lightning, they would suddenly stop; and, at other times, when they had not rang before, they would, after a flash, suddenly begin to ring; that the electricity was sometimes very faint, so that, when a small spark was obtain'd, another could not be got for some time after; at other times the sparks would follow extremely quick, and once I had a continual stream from bell to bell, the size of a crow quill: Even during the same gust there were considerable variations.

In the winter following I conceived an experiment, to try whether the clouds were electrify'd *positively* or *negatively*.

The result of these experiments, conducted with Franklin's usual painstaking completeness, was the conclusion on his part that thunder-clouds are, as a rule, in a negatively

electrical state, and that, therefore, generally speaking, they do not discharge electricity upon the earth, but receive it from the earth. For the most part, he said, "*'tis the earth that strikes into the clouds, and not the clouds that strike into the earth.*"

The thoroughness with which he addressed himself to the study of electricity was very marked. His investigation was as searching and minute as that of an anatomist engaged in the dissection of nervous tissue. Under his hands, the bare Leyden Jar became a teeming storehouse of instruction and amusement. He collected electricity from common objects by friction, he brought it down from the sky, he sought its properties in amber, in the tourmaline stone, in the body of the torpedo; he thought that he discerned it in the radiance of the Aurora Borealis. He put it through all its vagaries, juggled with it, teased it, cowed it until it confessed its kinship with the tempestuous heavens. He tested its destructive effects upon hens and turkeys, its therapeutic value to paralytic patients, its efficacy as a corrective of tough meat. He even, it is said, charged the railing under his windows with it to repel loafers standing about his front door. And, in his relations to electricity, as to everything else, his purposes were always those of practical utility. In one of his papers, he admits that he cannot tell why points possess the power of drawing off the electrical fire;

> nor is it of much importance to us [he adds] to know the manner in which nature executes her laws. 'Tis enough if we know the laws themselves. 'Tis of real use to know that china left in the air unsupported will fall and break; but *how* it comes to fall, and *why* it breaks, are matters of speculation. 'Tis a pleasure indeed to know them, but we can preserve our china without it.

He anticipated, or, in some instances, all but anticipated, several of the more important discoveries of modern

electrical science. He knew that, when a number of Leyden jars are connected up under certain conditions, the extent, to which each jar can be charged from a given source, varies inversely as the number of jars. For a time, he was puzzled by the fact that the light of a candle, or of a fire-coal, or of red-hot iron, would destroy the repellency between his electrified ball and shot, but that the light of the sun would not. But it was not long before he hit upon this ingenious explanation:

> This different Effect probably did not arise from any difference in the light, but rather from the particles separated from the candle, being first attracted and then repelled, carrying off the electric matter with them; and from the rarefying the air, between the glowing coal or red-hot iron, and the electrised shot, through which rarefied air the electric fluid could more readily pass.

Referring to what Franklin had to say about the action of sunlight in this connection, Arthur Schuster, in his *Some Remarkable Passages in the Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, observes: "Had Franklin used a clean piece of zinc instead of iron shot he might have anticipated Hertz's discovery of the action of strong light on the discharge of gases."

In the course of one of his experiments with an electrified can, Franklin reached the conclusion that a cork, which he had lowered into the can, was not attracted to its internal surface, as it would have been to its external, because the mutual repulsion of the two inner opposite sides of the can might prevent the accumulation of an electrical atmosphere upon them. From the same experiment, the genius of Henry Cavendish deduced his law that electrical repulsion varies inversely as the square of the distance between the charges.

Instead of declining, it can truly be said that the reputation of Franklin as an electrical investigator and writer

has increased with the progress of electrical science. "We shall, I am sure," remarks Professor J. J. Thomson in his *Electricity and Matter*, "be struck by the similarity between some of the views which we are led to take by the results of the most recent researches, with those enunciated by Franklin in the very infancy of the subject." Nor should we omit a tribute of Dr. William Garnett, in his *Heroes of Science*, in regard to the statements in Franklin's first letters to Collinson. "They are," he says, "perfectly consistent with the views held by Cavendish and by Clerk Maxwell, and, though the phraseology is not that of modern text-books, the statements themselves can hardly be improved upon today."

If Franklin achieved a higher degree of success in the electrical than in any other scientific field, it was partly, at any rate, because he never again had the opportunity to give such continuous attention to scientific pursuits. To him this was at times a source of very great disappointment. In one of his letters to Beccaria, dated Sept. 21, 1768, he tells the latter that, preoccupied as he was, he had constantly cherished the hope of returning home, where he could find leisure to resume the philosophical studies that he had shamefully put off from time to time. In a letter, some eleven years later, from Paris, to the same correspondent, he said that he was then prevented by similar distractions from pursuing those studies in which he always found the highest satisfaction, and that he was grown so old as hardly to hope for a return of the leisure and tranquillity, so necessary for philosophical disquisitions. To Sir Joseph Banks he was inspired some years later, by recent astronomical discoveries, made under the patronage of the Royal Society, to write: "I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon, since I cannot have the happiness of knowing what will be known 100 years hence." Indeed, to him, leisure, whether only the seclusion of a thirty-day voyage across the Atlantic, or

the final cessation of public life, was but another term for recurrence to his scientific predilections. When he received his leave from Congress to return home from Paris, he wrote joyously to Ingenhousz: "I shall now be free of Politicks for the Rest of my Life. Welcome again my dear Philosophical Amusements." There was, to use his own expression, still too much flesh on his bones for his countrymen to allow him any time except for political experiments; but, for proof of the eager interest that he felt in science, and of the prominent position, that he occupied in the scientific world of America, until the last, we need go no further than the fact that, when he died, the meetings of the American Philosophical Society had, for some time, been held at his home in Philadelphia.

How far Franklin might have added to his reputation as a man of science, if he had not become engrossed by political duties and cares, is mere matter of surmise. But there can be no doubt that he was eminently fitted in many respects for scientific inquiry. The scientific temperament he possessed in the very highest degree. He loved the truth too much to allow the workings of human weakness in himself or others to deface its fair features. In reporting to Collinson the electrical achievements, which crowned him with such just renown, he almost invariably spoke of them as if they were the joint achievements of a group of collaborators, of whom he was but one. The generous alacrity, with which he credits to his friends Hopkinson, Kinnersley, or Syng exclusively special discoveries or inventions, made by them, shows conclusively enough how little this was true. There is no reason to believe that his letters to Collinson on electricity would ever have been published but for the unsolicited initiative of Dr. Fothergill and Collinson; or that they would ever have been translated into French but for the spontaneous persuasion that Buffon brought to bear upon D'Alibard. In a letter to Collinson, after expressing distrust of an

hypothesis, advanced by him in former letters to the same correspondent, he declares that he is ashamed to have expressed himself in so positive a manner. Indeed, he said, he must request Collinson not to expose those letters, or, if he communicated them to any of his friends, at least to conceal the name of the author. His attitude towards his scientific triumphs was, when not that of entire self-effacement, always that of unaffected humility.

I am indebted for your preceding letter [he wrote in his forty-seventh year to John Perkins] but business sometimes obliges one to postpone philosophical amusements. Whatever I have wrote of that kind, are really, as they are entitled, but *Conjectures* and *Suppositions;* which ought always to give place, when careful observation militates against them. I own I have too strong a penchant to the building of hypotheses; they indulge my natural indolence: I wish I had more of your patience and accuracy in making observations, on which, alone, true philosophy can be founded.

Equally candid and noble are other observations in a subsequent letter to the same correspondent. Referring to certain objections, made by Perkins to his theory of water spouts, he observed:

Nothing certainly can be more improving to a Searcher into Nature, than Objections judiciously made to his Opinions, taken up perhaps too hastily: For such Objections oblige him to re-study the Point, consider every Circumstance carefully, compare Facts, make Experiments, weigh Arguments, and be slow in drawing Conclusions. And hence a sure Advantage results; for he either confirms a Truth, before too lightly supported; or discovers an Error, and receives Instruction from the Objector.

In this View I consider the Objections and Remarks you sent me, and thank you for them sincerely.

When he found that he was in error, it cost him no struggle to recant. For a while he believed the sea to be

the grand source of lightning, and built up an imposing fabric of conclusions upon the belief; but he did not hesitate afterwards to admit that he had embraced this opinion too hastily. The same thing is true of the opinion that he held for a time, that the progress of a ship westward, across the Atlantic, is retarded by the diurnal motion of the earth. He supposed that the melting brought about by the action of lightning was a cold fusion until holes burnt in a floor by portions of a molten bell wire convinced him that this was not so.

I was too easily led into that error [he said] by accounts given even in philosophical books, and from remote ages downwards, of melting money in purses, swords in scabbards, etc. without burning the inflammable matters that were so near those melted metals. But men are, in general, such careless observers, that a philosopher can not be too much on his guard in crediting their relations of things extraordinary, and should never build an hypothesis on anything but clear facts and experiments, or it will be in danger of soon falling, as this does, like a house of cards.

In one of his letters to Collinson, he declared that, even though future discoveries should prove that certain conjectures of his were not wholly right, yet they ought in the meantime to be of some use by stirring up the curious to make more experiments and occasion more exact disquisitions. Following out the same thought in another letter to Collinson he concluded: "You are at liberty to communicate this paper to whom you please; it being of more importance that knowledge should increase, than that your friend should be thought an accurate philosopher." In a letter to John Lining, in which he described the experiment from which Cavendish deduced the law of which we have spoken, he observed:

I find a frank acknowledgement of one's ignorance is not only the easiest way to get rid of a dificulty, but the likeliest

way to obtain information, and therefore I practise it: I think it an honest policy. Those who affect to be thought to know everything, and so undertake to explain everything often remain long ignorant of many things that others could and would instruct them in, if they appeared less conceited.

The fact is that Franklin had such a keen sense of the dignity and invincibility of truth that he could not be induced to enter into any personal controversy about it. His feelings with regard to such controversies are pointedly expressed in the *Autobiography* in connection with the attack made by the Abbé Nollet upon his electrical experiments.

I once purpos'd [he said] answering the abbé, and actually began the answer; but, on consideration that my writings contain'd a description of experiments which anyone might repeat and verify, and if not to be verifi'd, could not be defended; or of observations offer'd as conjectures, and not delivered dogmatically, therefore not laying me under any obligation to defend them; and reflecting that a dispute between two persons, writing in different languages, might be lengthened greatly by mistranslations, and thence misconceptions of one another's meaning, much of one of the abbé's letters being founded on an error in the translation, I concluded to let my papers shift for themselves, believing it was better to spend what time I could spare from public business in making new experiments, than in disputing about those already made.

But in this instance, too, after all, he acted upon the principle, stated in one of his letters to Cadwallader Colden, that he who removes a prejudice, or an error from our minds contributes to their beauty, as he would do to that of our faces who should clear them of a wart or a wen. He went through his experiments again, and satisfied himself that the Abbé had not shaken his positions. At one time, when he was hesitating as to whether he should

reply to him, he heard that D'Alibard was preparing to do so. "Perhaps," he wrote to his friend, James Bowdoin, "it may then appear unnecessary for me to do anything farther in it. And will not one's vanity be more gratified in seeing one's adversary confuted by a disciple, than even by one's self?" When Wilson published a pamphlet, contending that lightning rods should be blunt rather than pointed, he simply observed, "I have not answered it, being averse to Disputes."

Not only his temperament but his general mental attitude was instinctively scientific. As we have seen, while Whitefield's other auditors were standing mute and spellbound, he was carefully computing the distance that the words of the orator would carry. As we have also seen, when his soldiers were cutting down the giant pines at Gnadenhutten, he had his watch out, deep in his observation of the time that it took them to fell a tree. When his friend, Small, complained of deafness, he wrote to him that he had found by an experiment at midnight that, by putting his thumb and fingers behind his ear, and pressing it out and enlarging it as it were with the hollow of his hand, he could hear the tick of a watch at the distance of forty-five feet which was barely audible at a distance of twenty feet without these aids. Even in his relations to the simplest concerns of life, he had always the eye of a man of science to weight, measure, dimension and distance. If anyone wishes to see how easily he reduced everything to its scientific principles, let him read Franklin's letter to Oliver Neave, who thought that it was too late in life for him to learn to swim. With the confidence bred by a proper sense of the specific gravity of the human body as compared with that of water, Franklin said, there was no reason why a human being should not swim at the first trial. If Neave would only wade out into a body of water, until it came up to his breast and by a cast of his hand sink an egg to the bottom, between him and the shore, where it

would be visible, but could not be reached except by diving, and then endeavor to recover it, he would be surprised to find what a buoyant thing water was.

Franklin also had all the inquisitiveness of a born philosopher. The winds, the birds, the fish, the celestial phenomena brought to his attention on his first voyage from England, the sluggish movement of his ship on his voyage to England in 1757, the temperature and movement of the Gulf Stream, the social and religious characteristics of the Moravians, Indian traits and habits, the still flies in their bath of Madeira wine—all excited his insatiable curiosity, and started him off on interesting trains of observation or reflection.

He was in the 78th year of his age, when, in the sight of fifty thousand people, one of the balloons recently invented by the Montgolfiers, and inflated with gas, produced by pouring oil of vitriol on iron filings, ascended from the Champs de Mars, shining brightly in the sun during the first stages of its ascent, then dwindling until it appeared scarcely larger than an orange, and then melting away in the clouds that had never before been invaded by such a visitant. But so fresh still was his interest in every triumph of human ingenuity, that it required a long letter to Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, supplemented by two postscripts, to disburthen his mind of the sensations and thoughts excited by the thrilling spectacle. Mingled in this letter with many precise details of size, weight and distance are the speculations of the Parisians with respect to the practical uses to which the toy might be put. Some believed that, now that men might be supported in the air, nothing was wanted but some light handy instruments to give and direct motion. Others believed that a running footman, or a horse, slung and suspended under such a globe, so as to diminish the weight of their feet on the ground to perhaps eight or ten pounds, might, with a fair wind, run in a

straight line across country as fast as that wind, and over hedges, ditches and even waters. Still other fantasies were that in time such globes might be kept anchored in the air for the purpose of preserving game, or converting water into ice; or might be turned to pecuniary profit as a means of giving recreation-seekers a chance, at an altitude of a mile, to see far below them a vast stretch of the terrestrial surface. Already, said Franklin, one philosopher, M. Pilâtre de Rozier, had applied to the Academy for the privilege of ascending in a larger Montgolfier in order to make certain scientific experiments. The peasants at Gonesse, however, who had seen the balloon, cut adrift on the Champs de Mars, fall to the earth, had regarded it with very different feelings from the citizens of Paris. Frightened, and conceiving from its bounding a little, when it touched the ground, that there was some living animal in it, they had attacked it with stones and knives, so that it was much mangled.

With a subsequent letter to Dr. Price, Franklin enclosed a small balloon, which his grandson had filled with inflammable air the night before, and which, after mounting to the ceiling of Franklin's chamber, had remained rolling about there for some time. "If a Man," this letter suggestively asks, "should go up with one of the large ones, might there not be some mechanical Contrivance to compress the Globe at pleasure; and thereby incline it to descend, and let it expand when he inclines to rise again?" The same eager curiosity about the balloon was manifested by Franklin in many other later letters. Another great one, he informed Banks, had gone up from Versailles. It was supposed to have been inflated with air, heated by burning straw, and to have risen about two hundred toises; but did not continue long at that height, and, after being wafted in a horizontal direction by the wind, descended gently, as the air in it grew cooler. "So vast a Bulk," said Franklin, "when it began to rise so

majestically in the Air, struck the Spectators with Surprise and Admiration. The Basket contain'd a Sheep, a Duck & a Cock, who except the Cock receiv'd no hurt by the fall." Another balloon of about five feet in diameter, the same letter stated, had been sent up about one o'clock in the morning with a large lanthorn under it by the Duke de Crillon at an entertainment, given by him, during the preceding week, in the Bois de Boulogne in honor of the birth of two Spanish princes. These were but a few of many recent ascensions. Most interesting of all, however, a new balloon, designed by Messieurs Charles and Robert, who were men of science and mechanical dexterity, was to carry up a man.

Another balloon, described by Franklin in one of his letters to Banks, was open at the bottom, and was fed with heated air from a grate, fixed in the middle of the opening, which was kept replenished with faggots and sheaves of straw by men, posted in a wicker gallery, attached to the outside of the lower part of the structure. By regulating the amount of fire in the grate, the balloon could be given an upward or downward direction at pleasure.

It was thought, Franklin said, that a balloon of this type, because of the rapidity and small expense, with which it could be inflated, might be made useful for military purposes.

Still another balloon described by Franklin in the same letter was one which was to be first filled with "permanently elastic inflammable air," and then closed. It was twenty-six feet in diameter, and made of gores of red and white silk, which presented a beautiful appearance. There was a very handsome triumphal car, to be suspended from it, in which two brothers, the Messrs. Robert, were to ascend with a table for convenience in jotting down their thermometric and other observations. There was no telling, Franklin declared, how far aeronautic improve-

ments might be pushed. A few months before, the idea of witches riding through the air on a broomstick, and that of philosophers upon a bag of smoke would have appeared equally impossible and ridiculous. The machines, however, he believed, would aways be subject to be driven by the winds, though perhaps mechanic art might find easy means of giving them progressive motion in a calm, and of slanting them a little in the wind. English philosophy was too bashful, and should be more emulous in this field of competition. If, in France, they did a foolish thing, they were the first to laugh at it themselves, and were almost as much pleased with a *bon mot* or a good *chanson*, that ridiculed well the disappointment of the project, as they might have been with its success.

The experiment might be attended with important consequences that no one could foresee.

> Beings of a frank and—nature far superior to ours [the letter continued] have not disdained to amuse themselves with making and launching balloons, otherwise we should never have enjoyed the light of those glorious objects that rule our day and night, nor have had the pleasure of riding round the sun ourselves upon the balloon we now inhabit.

In due course, the Messrs. Robert, accompanied by M. Charles, a professor of experimental philosophy, and an enthusiastic student of aeronautics, made their perilous venture, which was likewise fully chronicled by Franklin. The spectators, he said, were infinite, crowding about the Tuileries, on the quays and bridges, in the fields and streets, and at the windows, and on the roofs, of houses. The device of stimulating flagging ascent by dropping sand bags from the car was one of the features of this incident, and so was the device of protecting the envelope of the balloon from rupture by covering it with a net, as well as that of lowering it by letting a part of its contents escape through a valve controlled by a cord.

Between one and two o'clock [Franklin's narrative states] all eyes were gratified with seeing it rise majestically from among the trees, and ascend gradually above the buildings, a most beautiful spectacle. When it was about two hundred feet high, the brave adventurers held out and waved a little white pennant, on both sides their car, to salute the spectators who returned loud claps of applause.

When Franklin last saw the vanishing form of this balloon, it appeared no bigger than a walnut. The experiment proved a most prosperous one. From first to last the aerial navigators retained perfect command of their air-ship, descending, when they pleased, by letting some of the air in it escape, and rising, when they pleased, by discharging sand; and at one time skimming over a field so low as to be able to talk to some laborers. Pleased as Franklin was with the experiment, he wrote to Henry Laurens that he yet feared that the machine would hardly become a common carriage in his time, though, being the easiest of all *voitures*, it would be extremely convenient to him, now that his malady forbade him the use of the old ones over a pavement. The idea, however, was such an agreeable one to him that, when he returned to Philadelphia, he wrote to his friend Jean Baptiste Le Roy that he sometimes wished that he had brought a balloon from France with him sufficiently large to raise him from the ground, and to permit him, without discomfort from his stone, to be led around in his novel conveyance by a string, attached to it, and held by an attendant on foot.

On the whole, it appeared to Franklin that the invention of the balloon was a thing of great importance.

Convincing sovereigns of the Folly of Wars [he wrote to Ingenhousz] may perhaps be one Effect of it; since it will be impracticable for the most potent of them to guard his Dominions. Five thousand Balloons, capable of raising two Men each could not cost more than Five Ships of the Line; and

where is the Prince who can afford so to cover his Country with Troops for its Defence, as that Ten Thousand Men descending from the Clouds might not in many places do an infinite deal of mischief, before a Force could be brought together to repel them?

But nothing happened in Franklin's time, nor has happened since, to warrant the belief that human flying-devices of any sort will ever be free enough from danger to human life to be a really useful vehicle of transportation in times of peace. So far their principal value has been during war, when human safety has little to choose between the earth and the sky, but it is fair to say that Franklin would have loathed war even more deeply than he did, if he could have lived to see them in the form of aeroplane or dirigible, making their way through the air like winged monsters of the antediluvian past, and dropping devilish agencies of death and desolation upon helpless innocence, and the fairest monuments of human industry and art. Poor M. Pilâtre de Rozier, whom we have already mentioned, and who was no less a person than the Professor of Chemistry, at the Athenée Royale, of which he was the founder, fell with a companion, from an altitude of one thousand toises to the rocky coast near Boulogne-sur-Mer, and was, as well as his companion, dashed to pieces. Since his time the dischariоted Phaetons, who have fallen from the upper levels of the atmosphere, even when not engaged in war, with the same fearful result, have been numerous enough to constitute a ghastly necrology. Nor, it would appear, was the peril under the conditions of aerial navigation in its earliest stages limited to the aeronaut himself. In dissuading Ingenhousz from attempting a balloon experiment, Franklin said that it was a serious thing to draw out from their affairs all the inhabitants of a great city and its environs, and that a disappointment made them angry. At Bordeaux lately, a person, who pretended to send up a balloon, and had received

money from many people, not being able to make it rise, the populace were so exasperated that they pulled down his house, and had like to have killed him. Anyone, who has ever heard the execrations hurled at the head of a baseball umpire in the United States, when one of his decisions has failed to command general assent, will experience no difficulty, we are sure, in understanding the force of the impulse that provoked this outbreak of Gallic excitement.

The enthusiasm, aroused in Franklin by the balloon, is not more noticeable than his brooding desire to find some practical use for it. The visionary speculation, which seeks to take the moon in its teeth, was no part of his character. He grew no orchids in the air. To use his homely words in a letter to Charles Thomson, he made no shoes for feet that he had never measured. Every conclusion, every hypothesis had to be built upon a basis of patient observation and gradual induction; every invention or discovery had to have some useful application.

At an earlier period than that of the discovery of the balloon, his inquisitive spirit had led him to the study of marsh-gas and the pacifying effect of oil upon troubled waters. In 1764, he had reason to believe that a friend of his had succeeded in igniting the surface of a river in New Jersey, after stirring up the mud beneath it, but his scientific friends in England found it difficult to believe that he had not been imposed upon; and the Royal Society withheld from publication among its Transactions a paper on the experiment, written by Dr. Finley, the President of Princeton College, and read before it. Franklin twice tried it in England without success, and he prosecuted his investigation with such energy and persistency that he finally contracted an intermittent fever by bending over the stagnant water of a deep ditch, and inhaling its foul breath, or, as would now be said, by being bitten by a mosquito hovering about it.

In 1757, when on one of the ships, bound on Lord Loudon's fool's errand to Louisburg, he observed that the water in the wake of two of them was remarkably smooth, while that in the wake of the others was ruffled by the wind, which was blowing freshly, and, when he spoke of the circumstance to his captain, the latter answered somewhat contemptuously, as if to a person ignorant of what everybody else knew, "The cooks have, I suppose, been just emptying their greasy water through the scuppers, which has greased the sides of those ships a little." The incident, and what he had read in Pliny about the practice among the seamen of Pliny's time of calming rough seas with oil, made him resolve to test the matter by experiment at the first opportunity. This intention was afterwards strengthened, when he was again at sea in 1762, by the "wonderful quietness" of oil, resting on the surface of an agitated bed of water in the glass lamp swinging in his cabin, and by the supposition of an old sea captain that the phenomenon was in keeping with the practice, pursued by the Bermudians, of putting oil on water, when they would strike fish. By the same captain, he was told that he had heard that fishermen at Lisbon were in the habit of emptying a bottle or two of oil on the sea, when the breakers on the bar at that port were running too high for their boats to cross it in safety. From another person, he learnt that, when divers in the Mediterranean needed more light for their business, they spewed out from their mouths now and then a small quantity of oil, which, rising to the surface, smoothed out its refracting waves. This additional information supplied his curiosity with still further fuel. It all ended in his dropping a little oil from a cruet on a large pond at Clapham. The fluid spread with surprising swiftness over the surface, on which it had fallen; but he found that he had made the mistake of dropping it on the leeward, instead of the windward, side of the pond. When this mistake was

repaired, and a teaspoonful of oil was poured on its windward side, where the waves were in an incipient state, and the oil could not be driven back on the shore, an instant calmness diffused itself over a space several yards square, which extended gradually until it reached the lee side of the pond, making all that quarter of it, perhaps half an acre, as smooth as a looking-glass. After this, he took with him, whenever he went into the country, a little oil, in the upper hollow joint of his bamboo cane for the purpose of repeating his experiment, whenever he had a chance to do so, and, when he did repeat it, it was usually with success.

Far from being so successful, however, was the experiment when, on a blustering, unpleasant day, he attempted, with the co-operation of Sir Joseph Banks and other friends, to still the surf on a shore at Portsmouth with oil poured continually on the sea, at some distance away, through a hole, somewhat bigger than a goose quill, in the cork of a large stone bottle, though the effusion did flatten out a considerable tract of the sea to such an extent that a wherry, making for Portsmouth, seemed to turn into that tract of choice, and to use it from end to end as a piece of turnpike road. All this is described by Franklin in a letter to William Brownrigg, dated November 7, 1773, in which he cited some other illustrations of the allaying effect of oil on waves besides those that we have mentioned, and developed the philosophy of the subject with that incomparable clarity of his, not unlike the action of oil itself in subduing refractions of light.

Now I imagine [he says] that the wind, blowing over water thus covered with a film of oil, can not easily *catch* upon it, so as to raise the first wrinkles, but slides over it, and leaves it smooth as it finds it. It moves a little the oil indeed, which being between it and the water, serves it to slide with, and prevents friction, as oil does between those parts of a machine

that would otherwise rub hard together. Hence the oil dropped on the windward side of a pond proceeds gradually to leeward, as may be seen by the smoothness it carries with it, quite to the opposite side. For the wind being thus prevented from raising the first wrinkles, that I call the elements of waves, cannot produce waves, which are to be made by continually acting upon, and enlarging those elements, and thus the whole pond is calmed.

And the water in which the Bermudian struck his fish is not more limpid than these observations suggested by the Portsmouth experiment:

I conceive, that the operation of oil on water is, first, to prevent the raising of new waves by the wind; and, secondly, to prevent its pushing those before raised with such force, and consequently their continuance of the same repeated height, as they would have done, if their surface were not oiled. But oil will not prevent waves being raised by another power, by a stone, for instance, falling into a still pool; for they then rise by the mechanical impulse of the stone, which the greasiness on the surrounding water cannot lessen or prevent, as it can prevent the winds catching the surface and raising it into waves. Now waves once raised, whether by the wind or any other power, have the same mechanical operation, by which they continue to rise and fall, as a *pendulum* will continue to swing a long time after the force ceases to act by which the motion was first produced; that motion will, however, cease in time; but time is necessary. Therefore, though oil spread on an agitated sea may weaken the push of the wind on those waves whose surfaces are covered by it, and so, by receiving less fresh impulse, they may gradually subside; yet a considerable time, or a distance through which they will take time to move, may be necessary to make the effect sensible on any shore in a diminution of the surf; for we know, that, when wind ceases suddenly, the waves it has raised do not as suddenly subside, but settle gradually, and are not quite down till after the wind has ceased. So, though we should, by oiling them, take off the effect of wind on waves already raised, it is not to be

expected that those waves should be instantly levelled. The motion they have received will, for some time, continue; and, if the shore is not far distant, they arrive there so soon, that their effect upon it will not be visibly diminished.

Nor was it on Clapham Pond and at Portsmouth alone that Franklin, when in England, tested the tranquillizing properties of oil. He performed the same experiment on Derwentwater and a small pond near the house of John Smeaton, the celebrated engineer, at Austhorpe Lodge; and also on a large sheet of water at the head of the Green Park. And the idea that there was something almost supernatural about his quick insight and fertility of conception, of which we find more than one trace in the utterances of his contemporaries, is suggested in an interesting manner in the account left to us by the Abbé Morellet of one of these experiments, which he witnessed when Colonel Barre, Dr. Hawkesworth, David Garrick, Franklin and himself happened to be guests of Lord Shelburne at Wycombe in 1772.

It is true [the Abbé says] it was not upon the waves of the sea but upon those of a little stream which flowed through the park at Wycombe. A fresh breeze was ruffling the water. Franklin ascended a couple of hundred paces from the place where we stood, and simulating the grimaces of a sorcerer, he shook three times upon the stream a cane which he carried in his hand. Directly the waves diminished and soon the surface was smooth as a mirror.

On one occasion, William Small wrote to him from Birmingham that Matthew Boulton had "astonished the rural philosophers exceedingly by calming the waves *à la Franklin*."

Struck, when travelling on a canal in Holland, with the statement of a boatman that their boat was going slow because the season had been a dry one, and the water in the canal was not as deep as usual, Franklin, by experi-

ment with a trough and a little boat borrowed for the purpose, established the fact that the friction caused by the displacement by a moving boat of shallow water is measurably greater than that caused by the displacement by such a boat of deeper water. Under like conditions in other respects, the difference, he concluded, in a distance of four leagues, was the difference between five and four hours.

A conversation with Captain Folger, of Nantucket, produced far more important consequences. Influenced by what the captain told him of the knowledge that the Nantucket whalers had acquired of the retarding effect of the Gulf Stream upon navigation, Franklin induced him to plat for him the dimensions, course and swiftness of the stream, and to give him written directions as to how ships, bound from the Newfoundland Banks to New York, might avoid it, and at the same time keep clear of certain dangerous banks and shoals. The immediate object of Franklin was to procure information for the English Post Office that would enable the mail packets between England and America to shorten their voyages. At his instance, Captain Folger's drawing was engraved on the old chart of the Atlantic at Mount and Page's, Tower Hill, and copies of it were distributed among the captains of the Falmouth packets. Ever afterwards the Gulf Stream was a favorite field of investigation to him, when at sea, and its phenomena were mastered by him with remarkable thoroughness. It was generated, he conjectured, by the great accumulation of water on the eastern coast of America created by the trade winds which constantly blew there. He found that it was always warmer than the sea on each side of it, and that it did not sparkle at night; and he assigned to its influence the tornadoes, waterspouts and fogs by which its flow was attended.

Franklin also possessed to a striking degree the inventive capacity which is such a valuable qualification for experimental philosophy. We have already seen how

ready his mechanical skill was in supplying printing deficiencies. Speaking of the pulse glasses, made by Nairne, in which water could be brought to the boiling point with the heat of the hand, he tells us:

I plac'd one of his glasses, with the elevated end against this hole (a hole that he had opened through the wainscot in the seat of his window for the access of outside air); and the bubbles from the other end, which was in a warmer situation, were continually passing day and night, to the no small surprize of even philosophical spectators.

As he sat in his library at Philadelphia, in his last years, he was surrounded by various objects conceived by his own ingenuity. The seat of his chair became a step-ladder, when reversed, and to its arm was fastened a fan that he could work with a slight motion of his foot. Against his bookcase rested "the long arm" with which he lifted down the books on its upper shelves. The hours, minutes and seconds were told for him by a clock, of his own invention, with only three wheels and two pinions, in which even James Ferguson, mathematician as he was, had to confess that he experienced difficulty in making improvements. The very bifocal glasses, now in such general use, that he wore were a triumph of his own quick wit. Describing this invention of his in a letter to George Whatley, he said:

I therefore had formerly two Pair of Spectacles, which I shifted occasionally, as in travelling I sometimes read, and often wanted to regard the Prospects. Finding this Change troublesome, and not always sufficiently ready, I had the Glasses cut, and half of each kind associated in the same Circle. . . . By this means, as I wear my Spectacles constantly, I have only to move my Eyes up or down, as I want to see distinctly far or near, the proper Glasses being always ready. This I find more particularly convenient since my being in France, the Glasses that serve me best at Table to see what I eat, not being the best to see the Faces of those on the other Side

of the Table who speak to me; and when one's Ears are not well accustomed to the Sounds of a Language, a Sight of the Movements in the Features of him that speaks helps to explain; so that I understand French better by the help of my Spectacles.

The shrinking that a mahogany box, given to him in England, underwent, when subjected to the atmospheric conditions of America, suggested a hygrometer to him which Nairne afterwards constructed in accordance with his plans.[1]

His mind seems to have had no torpid moments, except, perhaps, when some Congressional orator was speaking. When, in early life, he had nothing else better to do, he would address himself to making magic squares and circles as intricate as Rosamond's walk. "He took it into his head," James Logan wrote to Collinson, "to think

[1] The standing of Franklin as an inventor would be better established if he had not been so resolute in his unwillingness to take out patents upon his inventions. Besides the various inventions mentioned by us in the text, he was the father of other valuable mechanical conceptions. The first hint of the art of engraving upon earthenware appears to have originated with him. Moved by his constant desire to inculcate moral truths, he suggested about 1753 to a correspondent the idea of engraving from copper plates on square chimney tiles "moral prints"; "which," to use his words, "being about our Chimneys, and constantly in the Eyes of Children when by the Fireside, might give Parents an Opportunity, in explaining them, to impress moral Sentiments."

He also appears to have anticipated the Argand burner. A description has come down to us of a lamp devised by him which, with only three small wicks, had a lustre equal to six candles. It was fitted with a pipe that supplied fresh and cool air to its lights. If Franklin did not invent, he was the first to communicate to his friend, Mr. Viny, the wheel manufacturer at Tenderden, Kent, the art of flexing timber used in making wheels for vehicles. But of few things did Franklin take a gloomier view than the fate of the inventor as his observations in a letter to John Lining, dated March 18, 1755, demonstrate. "One would not," he said, "of all faculties or qualities of the mind, wish, for a friend, or a child, that he should have that of invention. For his attempts to benefit mankind in that way, however well imagined, if they do not succeed, expose him, though very unjustly, to general ridicule and contempt; and, if they do succeed, to envy, robbery, and abuse."

of *magical squares*, in which he outdid Frenicle himself, who published above eighty pages in folio on that subject alone." Not willing to be outdone even by Stifelius, Franklin drew a square of such extraordinary numerical properties that not only did the numbers on all the rows and diagonals on its face total 2056, but the sum of the numbers on every group of 16 smaller squares on its face, when revealed through a hole in a piece of paper, moved backwards and forwards over its face, equalled precisely 2056 too. He likewise drew a

magick circle, consisting of 8 concentric circles, and 8 radial rows, filled with a series of numbers, from 12 to 75, inclusive, so disposed as that the numbers of each circle or each radial row, being added to the central number 12, they made exactly 360, the number of degrees in a circle; and this circle had, moreover, all the properties of the square of 8.

Both of these conceits were duly forwarded to Collinson and, with regard to the square of 16, Franklin wrote to him playfully that he made no question but that he would readily allow that it was the most magically magical of any magic square ever made by any magician. From the terms of this letter, it is plain that the practical intellect of Franklin was a little ashamed of these feats as but *difficiles nugæ*, but his misgivings were somewhat soothed by the suggestion of Logan that they might not be altogether useless if they produced by practice an habitual readiness and exactness in mathematical disquisitions.

Hardly more profitable than the magic squares but indicative, too, of the same mental initiative, was the scheme formed by Franklin for a new alphabet and a reformed mode of spelling. In the new alphabet, the first effort was to arrange the letters in what was supposed to be a more natural order than that of the old alphabet by beginning with the simple sounds framed by the breath with no or very little help from the tongue, teeth and

lips, and proceeding gradually forward from sounds, produced at the back of the mouth, to the sound produced by closing the lips, that is *m*. The *c* of the old alphabet was omitted, *k* being left to supply its hard sound, and *s* its soft, and *k* being also left to supply the place of *q*, and with an *s* added, the place of *x*. *W* as well as *q* and *x* was also dismissed from service, the vowel *u*, sounded as *oo*, being relied upon to perform its function. *Y* also went by the board, *i* taking its place, where used singly, and two vowels, where used as a diphthong. *J* was superseded by an entirely new symbol, shaped something like a small *h*, and sounded as *ish*, when used singly, but subserving various other offices, when conjoined with *d*, *t* and *z*. As a whole, the new alphabet was so systematized that the sound of any letter, vowel or consonant was always the same, wherever it occurred, or whatever its alphabetical collocation. Nor did the new alphabet contain any silent letters, or fail to provide a letter for every distinct sound in the language. The difference between short and long vowels was compassed by a single vowel where short, and a double one, where long. For illustration, "mend" remained "mend" and "did," "did," but "remained" reappeared as "remeened," and "deed" as "diid." Typographical obstacles prevent us from bringing to the eye of the reader a specimen of the reformed alphabet and spelling as they looked on a printed page. They, of course, issued from the mind of Franklin as stillborn as his reformed Episcopal Prayer Book. His only proselytes appear to have been Polly, who even wrote a letter to him in the strange forms, and his loving sister, Jane, who was delighted to have another language with which to express her affection for him. Our world is one in which some things are made but others make themselves, and, however arbitrary their character, will not allow themselves to be made over, even at the behest of such merciless rationalism as that of Franklin.

In the latter part of Franklin's life, Noah Webster, the lexicographer, also formed a scheme for the reform of the alphabet, and Franklin had the pleasure of writing to him, "Our Ideas are so nearly similar, that I make no doubt of our easily agreeing on the Plan." Several years later, Webster, in his *Dissertations on the English Language*, stated that Franklin had compiled a dictionary, based upon his own reformatory system, and procured the types for printing it, but, finding himself too old to prosecute his design, had offered both manuscript and types to him. "Whether this project, so deeply interesting to this country," Webster said, "will ever be effected; or whether it will be defeated by insolence and prejudice, remains for my countrymen to determine."

Another thing upon which the ingenuity of Franklin was brought to bear, as the reader has already been told, was the Armonica. In his letter to Beccaria, extolling its merits, he describes it with a wealth of detail, not only thoroughly in keeping with his knack for mechanics, but showing that to music as to everything else, that won the favor of his intellect, he brought the ken of a man of science. The letter concludes with a dulcet compliment, which harmonizes well with its subject: "In honour of your musical language (the Italian), I have borrowed from it the name of this instrument, calling it the Armonica." In one of his papers, he drew up instructions for the proper use of the instrument which nothing but the most intimate familiarity with its operation could have rendered possible.

Admiration has often been expended upon the acuteness with which Franklin, in a letter to Lord Kames, accounted for the pleasure afforded by the old Scotch tunes, as compared with the pleasure afforded by the difficult music of his day, which, he said, was of the same nature as that awakened by the feats of tumblers and rope-dancers. The reason was this. The old Scotch melodies were composed by the minstrels of former days, to be played on the harp,

accompanied by the voice. The harp was strung with wire (which gives a sound of long continuance) and had no contrivance like that in the modern harpsichord, by which the sound of the preceding note could be stopped, the moment a succeeding note began. To avoid *actual* discord, it was therefore necessary that the succeeding emphatic note should be a chord with the preceding, as their sounds must exist at the same time. Hence arose that beauty in those tones that had so long pleased, and would please forever, though men scarce knew why.

The most useful invention of Franklin was what came to be known as the Franklin stove. With modifications, it is still in use, and the essay written on it by Franklin, entitled *An Account of the New-invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces*, is one of the best illustrations of the capacity of his scientific genius to adapt itself to the hardest and barest offices that human comfort and convenience could impose upon it with a nicety and accuracy of trained insight and touch worthy of the cleverest journeyman, a command of scientific principles to be expected only of a professional student, and a gift of clear, lively expression which reminds us of the remark of Stella that Dean Swift could write agreeably even about a broomstick. The principle upon which the Franklin stove was constructed was that of making the heat from its open fireplace, after first ascending to its top, descend in such a manner at its back, before passing off into the chimney, as to diffuse by radiation through the room, in which it stood, a large part of its warmth. The essay enumerates the different methods of heating rooms then in use: the great, open, smoky chimney-place, that the unremitting labor of one man could scarce keep supplied with fuel, and that gave out little more heat for human warmth than a fire outdoors; this chimney-place reduced to a smaller size with jambs, and free, to a great extent from the reproach of smokiness, yet, with its contraction setting up strong currents of

whistling and howling air, which reminded Franklin of the Spanish proverb,

> "If the Wind blows on you thro' a Hole,
> Make your Will, and take Care of your Soul";

the expensive and intricate French fireplaces with hollow backs, hearths and jambs of iron; the Holland stove, which shut off the sight of the fire, and could not conveniently be used for any purposes except those of warmth; the German stove which was subject to very much the same disadvantages as the Holland stove; and charcoal fires in pots which emitted disagreeable and dangerous fumes and were used chiefly in the shops of handicraftsmen. From the shortcomings of all these methods of heating rooms, the Franklin stove, its inventor contended, was exempt. It diffused heat equally throughout a whole room; if you sat in an apartment warmed by it, you were not scorched before, while you were frozen behind; nor were you exposed to the drafts from which so many women, particularly, got colds in the head, rheums and defluxions that fell upon their jaws and gums, and destroyed early many a fine set of teeth in the northern colonies, and from which so many persons of both sexes contracted coughs, catarrhs, toothaches, fevers, pleurisies and other diseases. It kept a sick room supplied with a fresh and yet properly tempered flow of pure air. It conserved heat. It economized fuel. With it, Franklin said, he could make his room twice as warm as it used to be with a quarter of the wood that he used to consume. If you burned candles near it, they did not flare and run off into tallow as in the case of ordinary fireplaces with their excessive drafts. It corrected most smoky chimneys. It prevented all kinds of chimneys from fouling, and if they fouled made them less likely to fire, and, if they fired, made the fire easier to repress. A flame could be speedily kindled in it with the help of the shutter or trap-bellows

that went along with it. A fire could be readily extinguished in it, or could be so secured in it that not one spark could fly out of it to do any damage. A room once warmed remained warm all night. "With all these Conveniences," concludes Franklin, "you do not lose the pleasing Sight nor Use of the Fire, as in the Dutch Stoves, but may boil the Tea-Kettle, warm the Flat-Irons, heat Heaters, keep warm a Dish of Victuals by setting it on the Top, &c. &c."

Some years after the publication of this essay, Franklin devised an improvement in the open chimney-place which tended to abate drafts and check the escape of heat up the chimney by contracting the chimney opening, bringing its breast down to within three feet of the hearth, and placing an iron frame just under this breast, with grooves on each side of the frame, in which an iron plate could be slid backwards and forwards at pleasure, for the purpose of cutting off the mouth of the chimney entirely from the chimney itself, when there was no fire on the hearth, or of leaving a space of not more than two inches for the escape of smoke between the further edge of the plate and the back of the chimney-mouth. This improved chimney-place was described by Franklin in letters to Alexander Dick and James Bowdoin. The letter to Bowdoin seems to leave little to be said on the subject of chimneys. It indicates that Franklin had subjected them to a scrutiny hardly less close than that which he had fixed upon the Leyden Jar. In connection with the currents and reverse currents, set up in them in summer by the relations of inequality, which the air in them sustains, at different hours of the day and night, to the outside temperature, he suggests that joints of meat might keep for a week or more during the hottest weather in chimney-openings, if well wrapt three or four fold in wet linen cloths, sprinkled once a day with water to prevent evaporation. Butter and milk in vessels and bottles covered with wet cloths

might, he thought, be preserved in the same way. And he even thought, too, that the movements of air in chimneys might, with the aid of smoke-jack vanes, be applied to some mechanical purposes, where a small but pretty constant power only was needed. To appreciate how patiently and exhaustively Franklin was in the habit of pursuing every course of observation or reflection opened up by his scientific propensities, the whole of this letter, which had much more to say on the subject of chimneys than we have mentioned, should be read.

At a later period of his life, Franklin describes to Turgot what he called his new stove. The novel feature of this consisted of an aerial syphon by which the smoke from the fireplace of the stove was first drawn upwards through the longer leg of the syphon, and then downwards through its shorter leg, and over burning coals, by which it was kindled into flame and consumed.

The ingenuity of Franklin was also exerted very successfully in the rectification of smoky chimneys. In his essay on the causes and cure of such chimneys, written on his last ocean voyage, he resolved the causes into no less than nine heads, and stated with his accustomed perspicuity and precision the remedy for each cause. In his time, the art of properly carrying off smoke through chimneys was but imperfectly understood by ordinary builders and mechanics, and it was of too humble a nature to tempt discussion by such men of science as were capable of clearly expounding the physical principles upon which it rested. It was not strange, therefore, that Franklin, who deemed nothing, that was useful, to be beneath the dignity of philosophy, should have acquired in his time the reputation of being a kind of "universal smoke doctor" and should have been occasionally consulted by friends of his, such as Lord Kames, about refractory chimneys. The only smoky chimney, that seems to have completely baffled his investigation, recalls in a way the philosopher,

who thought that he had discovered a new planet, but afterwards found that what he saw was only a fly in the end of his telescope. After exhausting every scientific resource in an effort to ascertain why the chimney in the country-house of one of his English friends smoked, Franklin was obliged to own the impotence for once of his skill; but, subsequently, his friend, who made no pretensions to the character of a fumist, climbed to the top of the funnel of his chimney by a ladder, and, on peering down into it, found that it had been filled by nesting birds with twigs and straw, cemented with clay, and lined with feathers.

Nor was the attention given by Franklin to ventilation by any means confined to chimneys. Air vitiated by human respiration also came in for a share of it. Describing an experiment by which he demonstrated the manner in which air affected in this way is purified, Alexander Small said:

> The Doctor confirmed this by the following experiment. He breathed gently through a tube into a deep glass mug, so as to impregnate all the air in the mug with this quality. He then put a lighted bougie into the mug; and upon touching the air therein the flame was instantly extinguished; by frequently repeating the operation, the bougie gradually preserved its light longer in the mug, so as in a short time to retain it to the bottom of it; the air having totally lost the bad quality it had contracted from the breath blown into it.

Franklin became deeply interested in the brilliant course of investigation pursued by Priestley with respect to gases, and several penetrating glances of his into the relations of carbonic acid gas to vegetation have come down to us. Observing on a visit to Priestley the luxuriance of some mint growing in noxious air, he suggested to Priestley that "the air is mended by taking something from it, and not by adding to it." He hoped, he said in a letter to Priestley, that the nutriment derived by vege-

tation from carbonic acid gas would give some check to the rage of destroying trees that grew near houses, which had accompanied recent improvements in gardening from an opinion of their being unwholesome.

Just as he was consulted about the best methods of protecting St. Paul's Cathedral and the arsenals at Purfleet from lightning, so he was also consulted by the British Government as to the best method for ventilating the House of Commons. "The personal atmosphere surrounding the members," he thought, "might be carried off by making outlets in perpendicular parts of the seats, through which the air might be drawn off by ventilators, so placed, as to accomplish this without admitting any by the same channels." The experiment might be tried upon some of our City Councilmen. Principles of ventilation, expounded by Franklin, were also utilized by the Messrs. Adam of the Adelphi, in the construction of the large room built by them for the meetings of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts. We also find him suggesting openings, close to the ceilings of rooms, and communicating with flues, constructed alongside of chimney flues, as effective means for ventilating rooms.

With all his primary and secondary gifts for scientific research, it is difficult to believe that, if Franklin had not been diverted from it by engrossing political cares, he would not have added both to his special reputation as a student of electricity and to his general reputation as a man of science. As it was, his civic activity and popular leadership in Pennsylvania, his several agencies abroad, his participation in the American Revolution, his career as Minister to France, and his official duties, after his return, made such imperious demands upon his time that he had little or no leisure left for scientific pursuits. This picture of his situation which he presented in a letter to Ingenhousz, when he was in France, was more or less true of almost every part of his life after he became famous:

Besides being harass'd with too much Business, I am expos'd to numberless Visits, some of Kindness and Civility, many of mere idle Curiosity, from Strangers of America & of different Parts of Europe, as well as the Inhabitants of the Provinces who come to Paris. These devour my Hours, and break my Attention, and at Night I often find myself fatigu'd without having done anything. Celebrity may for a while flatter one's Vanity, but its Effects are troublesome. I have begun to write two or three Things, which I wish to finish before I die; but I sometimes doubt the possibility.

Some of the reflections of Franklin on scientific subjects, such as his early letters to Cadwallader Colden with regard to "perspirants and absorbents" are, to use his own expression in one of them, too plainly *ultra crepidam* to have any value. Of others, we might fairly say that his knowledge of the topics which he handled in them was hardly deep enough to deserve any praise more confident than that which he allowed himself when writing to Cadwallader Colden in 1751 of the Philadelphia Experiments. "So," he said to Colden in this letter, "we are got beyond the skill of *Rabelais's* devils of two years old, who, he humorously says, had only learnt to thunder and lighten a little round the head of a cabbage." All the same, even aside from his electrical experiments, Franklin acquired no little fame as a philosopher, made more than one fruitful suggestion to fellow-workers of his in the domain of science and contributed many useful observations to the general fund of scientific thought.

Apparently his views on medical topics were held in very considerable respect. In 1777, he was elected a member of the Royal Medical Society of Paris, and in 1787 an honorary member of the Medical Society of London. Many works on medical subjects were dedicated to him by their authors. He was one of the commission which exposed the imposture of Mesmer. There are few things that give us a better idea of the extraordinary celebrity en-

joyed by him than the wide currency obtained by a spurious opinion of his, ascribing great merit to tobacco ashes as a remedy for dropsy. It won such an extensive circulation, and brought down on his head such a flood of questions from physicians and others, that he was compelled to deny flatly the truth of the story. One person, Lord Cadross, afterwards the Earl of Buchan, firmly believed that he would have perished at the hands of a professional physician, who wished to blister him, when he was afflicted with a fever, if Franklin had not dissented from the treatment. Franklin probably deserved no higher credit for his dissent on this occasion than that of sharing the opinion of Sir John Pringle, who was convinced that, out of every one hundred fevers, ninety-two cured themselves. So far as we can see, there is nothing in the works of Franklin to warrant the belief that he possessed any uncommon degree of medical knowledge, though he was full of curiosity with regard to medicine as with regard to every other branch of human learning. In one of his letters to Colden, written in his fortieth year, he expressed the hope that future experiment would confirm the idea that the yaws could be cured by tar-water. In a later letter to Colden, he expressed his pleasure at hearing more instances of the success of the poke-weed "in the Cure of that horrible Evil to the human Body, a Cancer." At his suggestion, a young physician, with the aid of Sanctorius' balance, tested alternately each hour, for eight hours, the amount of the perspiration from his body, when naked, and when warmly clad, and found that it was almost as great during the hours when he was naked. By his investigations into the malady known in his time popularly as "the dry bellyache," and learnedly as the "*colica Pictonum*," he conferred a real benefit upon medical science. His views upon the subject received the honor of being incorporated with due acknowledgments into Dr. John Hunter's essay on the *Dry Bellyache of the*

Tropics. Summarily speaking they were that the complaint was a form of lead poisoning.

I have long been of opinion [he wrote to Dr. Cadwallader Evans in 1768] that that distemper proceeds always from a metallic cause only; observing that it affects, among tradesmen, those that use lead, however different their trades,—as glaziers, letter-founders, plumbers, potters, white-lead makers, and painters; . . . although the worms of stills ought to be of pure tin, they are often made of pewter, which has a great mixture in it of lead.

The year before this letter was written, Franklin had found on reading a pamphlet, containing the names and vocations of the persons, who had been cured of the colic at Charité, a Parisian hospital, that all of them had followed trades, which handle lead in some form or other. On going over the vocations, he was at first puzzled to understand why there should be any stonecutters or soldiers among the sufferers, but his perplexity was cleared up by a physician at the hospital, who informed him that stonecutters frequently used melted lead for fixing the ends of iron balustrades in stone, and that the soldiers had been employed as laborers by painters, when grinding colors. These facts were long afterwards communicated by Franklin to Benjamin Vaughan in a letter, in which he cited other incidents, interesting partly because they corroborated his theory, and partly because they are additional proofs of his vigilance and patience in collecting facts, before advancing an hypothesis, as well as of a memory, which retained every instructive circumstance imparted to it by eye or ear as imperishably as hardening cement retains the impression of a dog's foot. When he was a boy at Boston, Franklin said, it was discovered that New England rum, which had produced the dry bellyache and paralyzed the limbs in North Carolina, had been made by distilleries with leaden still-heads and worms. Later,

when he was in London, he had been warned by an old workman at Palmer's printing-house, as well as by an obscure pain in his own hands, that it was a dangerous practice to handle a heated case of types. About the same time, a letter-founder in the same close at Palmer's, in a conversation with him, ascribed the existence of the ailment among his workmen to the fact that some of them were slovenly enough to go to their meals with unwashed hands that had come into contact with molten lead. He had also observed in Derbyshire that the smoke from lead furnaces was pernicious to grass and other vegetables, and in America had often observed that streaks on shingle roofs, made by white lead, washed from balusters or dormer window frames, were always entirely free from moss. He had also been told of a case where this colic had afflicted a whole family, and was supposed to be due to the corrosive effect of the acid in leaves, shed upon the roof, from which the family derived the supply of rain water, upon which it relied for drink.

More important still than the insight that Franklin obtained into the Painter's Colic was the insight which he obtained into the salutary effect of the custom which is now almost universal, except in the homes of the ignorant and squalid, of sleeping at night in rooms with the windows up. This custom, as well as the outdoor regimen, which has proved of such signal value in the treatment of tuberculosis, originated in hygienic conceptions identical with those steadfastly inculcated by him. His opinions with regard to colds and the benefits of pure air were expressed at many different times, and in many different forms, but nowhere so conveniently for the purposes of quotation as in a letter which he wrote to Dr. Benjamin Rush in 1773.

I hope [he said in this letter] that after having discovered the benefit of fresh and cool air applied to the sick, people will begin to suspect that possibly it may do no harm to the

well. I have not seen Dr. Cullen's book, but am glad to hear that he speaks of catarrhs or colds by contagion. I have long been satisfied from observation, that besides the general colds now termed *influenzas* (which may possibly spread by contagion, as well as by a particular quality of the air), people often catch cold from one another when shut up together in close rooms, coaches, &c., and when sitting near and conversing so as to breathe in each other's transpiration; the disorder being in a certain state. I think, too, that it is the frouzy, corrupt air from animal substances, and the perspired matter from our bodies, which being long confined in beds not lately used, and clothes not lately worn, and books long shut up in close rooms, obtains that kind of putridity, which occasions the colds observed upon sleeping in, wearing, and turning over such bedclothes, or books, and not their coldness or dampness. From these causes, but more from too full living, with too little exercise, proceed in my opinion most of the disorders, which for about one hundred and fifty years past the English have called *colds*.

As to Dr. Cullen's cold or catarrh *a frigore*, I question whether such an one ever existed. Travelling in our severe winters, I have suffered cold sometimes to an extremity only short of freezing, but this did not make me *catch cold*. And, for moisture, I have been in the river every evening two or three hours for a fortnight together, when one could suppose I might imbibe enough of it to *take cold* if humidity could give it; but no such effect ever followed. Boys never get cold by swimming. Nor are people at sea, or who live at Bermudas, or St. Helena, small islands, where the air must be ever moist from the dashing and breaking of waves against their rocks on all sides, more subject to colds than those who inhabit part of a continent where the air is driest. Dampness may indeed assist in producing putridity and those miasmata which infect us with the disorder we call a cold; but of itself can never by a little addition of moisture hurt a body filled with watery fluids from head to foot.

Franklin's belief that colds and overeating often went hand in hand also found expression in one of his letters

to Polly Stevenson. When sending her an account of some seamen, who had experienced considerable relief from thirst by wearing clothes kept constantly wet with salt water, he said, "I need not point out to you an Observation in favour of our Doctrine, that you will make on reading this Paper, that, *having little to eat*, these poor People in wet Clothes Day and Night *caught no cold.*" In every, or in practically every, case, he seems to have referred colds to what he rather vaguely calls a siziness and thickness of the blood, resulting from checked perspiration, produced by different agencies, including a gross diet.

Thus [he says in his *Notes and Hints for Writing a Paper Concerning what is called Catching Cold*], People in Rooms heated by a Multitude of People, find their own Bodies heated; thence the quantity of perspirable Matter is increased that should be discharged, but the Air, not being changed, grows so full of the same Matter, that it will receive no more. So the Body must retain it. The Consequence is, the next Day, perhaps sooner, a slight putrid Fever comes on, with all the Marks of what we call a Cold, and the Disorder is suppos'd to be got by coming out of a warm Room, whereas it was really taken while in that Room.

He did not shrink from any of the consequences of his reasoning about colds however extreme.

Be so kind as to tell me at your leisure [he wrote to Barbeu Dubourg], whether in France, you have a general Belief that moist Air, and cold Air, and damp Shirts or Sheets, and wet Floors, and Beds that have not lately been used, and Clothes that have not been lately worn, and going out of a warm Room into the Air, and leaving off a long-worn Wastecoat, and wearing leaky Shoes, and sitting near an Open Window, or Door, or in a Coach with both Glasses down, are all or any of them capable of giving the Distemper we call *a Cold*, and you *a Rheum, or Catarrh?* Or are these merely *English* ideas?

His views on the wholesomeness of fresh air were far in advance of the general intelligence of his time, and were expressed in spirited terms. After stating in a letter to Jean Baptiste Le Roy that he had become convinced that the idea that perspiration is checked by cold was an error as well as the idea that rheum is occasioned by cold, he added:

> But as this is Heresy here, and perhaps may be so with you, I only whisper it, and expect you will keep my Secret. Our Physicians have begun to discover that fresh Air is good for People in the Small-pox & other Fevers. I hope in time they will find out that it does no harm to People in Health.

At times his language on what he called *aerophobia* grew highly animated.

> What Caution against Air [he said in a letter to Thomas Percival], what stopping of Crevices, what wrapping up in warm Clothes, what shutting of Doors and Windows! even in the midst of Summer! Many London Families go out once a day to take the Air; three or four Persons in a Coach, one perhaps Sick; these go three or four Miles, or as many Turns in Hide Park, with the Glasses both up close, all breathing over & over again the same Air they brought out of Town with them in the Coach with the least change possible, and render'd worse and worse every moment. And this they call *taking the Air*.

Indeed, there is at times something just a little ludicrous in the uncompromising fervor with which Franklin insisted upon his proposition. It seemed strange he said, in the letter from which we have just quoted, that a man whose body was composed in great part of moist fluids, whose blood and juices were so watery, and who could swallow quantities of water and small beer daily without inconvenience, should fancy that a little more or less moisture in the air should be of such importance; but we abound in absurdity and inconsistency.

It is a delightful account that John Adams gives us of a night which he spent in the same bed with Franklin at New Brunswick, on their way to the conference with Lord Howe:

The chamber [Adams tells us] was little larger than the bed, without a chimney, and with only one small window. The window was open, and I, who was an invalid, and afraid of the air in the night, shut it close. "Oh!" says Franklin, "don't shut the window, we shall be suffocated." I answered I was afraid of the evening air. Dr. Franklin replied, "The air within this chamber will soon be, and indeed is now, worse than that without doors. Come, open the window and come to bed, and I will convince you. I believe you are not acquainted with my theory of colds." Opening the window and leaping into bed, I said I had read his letters to Dr. Cooper, in which he had advanced that nobody ever got cold by going into a cold church or any other cold air, but the theory was so little consistent with my experience, that I thought it a paradox. However, I had so much curiosity to hear his reasons, that I would run the risk of a cold. The Doctor then began a harangue upon air and cold, and respiration and perspiration, with which I was so much amused that I soon fell asleep, and left him and his philosophy together; but I believe they were equally sound and insensible within a few minutes after me, for the last words I heard were pronounced as if he was more than half asleep. I remember little of the lecture, except that the human body, by respiration and perspiration, destroys a gallon of air in a minute; that two such persons as we were now in that chamber would consume all the air in it in an hour or two; that by breathing over again the matter thrown off by the lungs and the skin, we should imbibe the real cause of colds, not from abroad, but from within.

At times Franklin merely gave hints to brother philosophers and left them to run the hints down. For instance, he suggested to M. De Saussure, of Geneva, who succeeded

in ascending Mont Blanc, the idea of ascertaining the lateral attraction of the Jura Mountains for the purpose of discovering the mean density of the earth upon the Newtonian theory of gravitation. This was subsequently done with complete success by Nevil Maskelyne on Mt. Schehallion in Perthshire. To Ingenhousz he suggested the idea of "hanging a weight on a spiral spring, to discover if bodies gravitated differently to the earth during the conjunctions of the sun and moon, compared with other times."

He gave very close study to the philosophy of waterspouts and whirlwinds and came to the conclusion that they were generated by the same causes, and were of the same nature, "the only Difference between them being, that the one passes over Land, the other over Water." He was the first person to discover that north-east storms did not begin in the north-east at all. The manner in which he did it is another good illustration of his quickness in noting the significance of every fact by which his attention was challenged. He desired to observe a lunar eclipse at nine o'clock in the evening at Philadelphia, but his efforts were frustrated by a north-east storm, which lasted for a night and a day, and did much damage all along the Atlantic coast. To his surprise he afterwards learnt from the Boston newspapers that the eclipse had been visible there, and, upon writing to his brother for particulars, was informed by him that it had been over for an hour when the storm set in at Boston; though it was apparently fair to assume that the storm began sooner at Boston than at Philadelphia. This information and further inquiry satisfied him that north-east storms commence southward and work their way to the north-east at the rate of a hundred miles an hour. When we read the words in which he stated his theory of such storms, we begin to understand what Sir Humphry Davy meant in saying that science appeared in Frank-

lin's language in a dress wonderfully decorous, and best adapted to display her native loveliness.

Suppose [he said to Jared Eliot] a great tract of country, land and sea, to wit, Florida and the Bay of Mexico, to have clear weather for several days, and to be heated by the sun, and its air thereby exceedingly rarefied. Suppose the country northeastward, as Pennsylvania, New England, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, to be at the same time covered with clouds, and its air chilled and condensed. The rarefied air being lighter must rise, and the denser air next to it will press into its place; that will be followed by the next denser air, that by the next, and so on. Thus, when I have a fire in my chimney, there is a current of air constantly flowing from the door to the chimney; but the beginning of the motion was at the chimney, where the air being rarefied by the fire rising, its place was supplied by the cooler air that was next to it, and the place of that by the next, and so on to the door. So the water in a long sluice or mill-race, being stopped by a gate, is at rest like the air in a calm; but as soon as you open the gate at one end to let it out, the water next the gate begins first to move, that which is next to it follows; and so, though the water proceeds forward to the gate, the motion which began there runs backward, if one may so speak, to the upper end of the race, where the water is last in motion.

It may be truly said of every province of scientific research into which Franklin ventured that he brought to it a bold and original spirit of speculation which gave it new interest and meaning. Even when he was not the first to kindle a light, he had a happy and effective way of trimming it anew and freshening its radiance. To Collinson he wrote on one ocasion, "But I must own I am much in the *Dark* about *Light.*" But noonday is not more luminous than what he had to say on the subject in this letter.

May not all the Phaenomena of Light [he asked] be more conveniently solved, by supposing universal Space filled with

a subtle elastic Fluid, which, when at rest, is not visible, but whose Vibrations affect that fine Sense the Eye, as those of Air do the grosser Organs of the Ear? We do not, in the Case of Sound, imagine that any sonorous Particles are thrown off from a Bell, for Instance, and fly in strait Lines to the Ear; why must we believe that luminous Particles leave the Sun and proceed to the Eye? Some Diamonds, if rubbed, shine in the Dark, without losing any Part of their Matter. I can make an Electrical Spark as big as the Flame of a Candle, much brighter, and, therefore, visible farther, yet this is without Fuel; and, I am persuaded no part of the Electric Fluid flies off in such Case to distant Places, but all goes directly, and is to be found in the Place to which I destine it. May not different Degrees of Vibration of the above-mentioned Universal Medium occasion the Appearances of different Colours? I think the Electric Fluid is always the same; yet I find that weaker and stronger Sparks differ in apparent Colour; some white, blue, purple, red; the strongest, White; weak ones, red. Thus different Degrees of Vibration given to the Air produce the 7 different Sounds in Music, analagous to the 7 Colours, yet the Medium, Air, is the same.

"Universal Space, as far as we know of it," he declared in his *Loose Thoughts on a Universal Fluid*, "seems to be filled with a subtil Fluid, whose Motion, or Vibration is called Light." And he then proceeds to found on this statement a series of speculations marked by too high a degree of temerity to have much scientific value. One sentiment in the paper, however, is well worth recalling as showing how clearly its author had grasped the conservation of matter. "The Power of Man relative to Matter," he observed, "seems limited to the dividing it, or mixing the various kinds of it, or changing its Form and Appearance by different Compositions of it; but does not extend to the making or creating of new Matter, or annihilating the old."

The Science of Palæontology was in its infancy during the lifetime of Franklin. Many years before Cuvier gave

the name of mastodon to the prehistoric beast, whose fossil remains had been brought to sight from time to time in different parts of the world, George Croghan, the Indian trader, sent to Franklin a box of tusks and grinders, which had been found near the Ohio, and which he supposed to be parts of a dismembered elephant. In his reply of thanks, Franklin observed that the tusks were nearly of the same form and texture as those of the African and Asiatic elephant. "But the grinders differ," he added, "being full of knobs, like the grinders of a carnivorous animal; when those of the elephant, who eats only vegetables, are almost smooth. But then we know of no other animal with tusks like an elephant, to whom such grinders might belong." The fact that, while elephants inhabited hot countries only, fragments such as those sent to him by Croghan were found in climates like those of the Ohio Territory and Siberia, looked, Franklin concluded, "as if the earth had anciently been in another position, and the climates differently placed from what they are at present." Contrasting the observations of this letter with the paper read long afterwards by Thomas Jefferson before the American Philosophical Society on the bones of a large prehistoric quadruped resembling the sloth, William B. Scott, the American palæontologist, remarks:

> Franklin's opinions are nearer to our present beliefs than were Jefferson's, written nearly forty years later. Of course, we now know that Franklin was mistaken in supposing that such bones were found only in what is now Kentucky and in Peru, and his comparison of the teeth of the mastodon with the "grinders of a carnivorous animal" is not very happy, but the inferences are remarkably sound, when we consider the state of geological knowledge in 1767.

In a letter to Antoine Court de Gébelin, the author of the *Monde Primitif*, Franklin gave him a valuable caution, in

relation to apparent linguistic variations. Strangers, who learnt the language of an Indian nation, he said, finding no orthography, formed each his own orthography according to the usual sounds given to the letters in his own language. Thus the same words of the Mohawk language, written by an English, a French and a German interpreter, often differed very much in the spelling.

Franklin's letters to Herschel, Maskelyne, Rittenhouse, Humphrey Marshall and James Bowdoin reveal a keen interest in astronomy, but this is not one of the fields from which he came off *cum laude*. Gratifying to the pride of an American, however, is an observation which he made to William Herschel, when the latter sent to him for the American Philosophical Society a catalogue of one thousand new nebulæ and star-clusters and stated at the same time that he had discovered two satellites, which revolved about the Georgian planet. In congratulating him on the discovery, Franklin said:

> You have wonderfully extended the Power of human Vision, and are daily making us Acquainted with Regions of the Universe totally unknown to mankind in former Ages. Had Fortune plac'd you in this part of America, your Progress in these Discoveries might have been still more rapid, as from the more frequent clearness of our Air, we have near one Third more in the year of good observing Days than there are in England.

The production of cold by evaporation was another subject which enlisted the eager interest of Franklin. In co-operation with Dr. Hadley, the Professor of Chemistry at Cambridge, England, he was so successful in covering a ball with ice by wetting it from time to time with ether, and blowing upon the ether with a bellows, that he could write to John Lining in these words: "From this experiment one may see the possibility of freezing a man

to death on a warm summer's day, if he were to stand in a passage through which the wind blew briskly, and to be wet frequently with ether, a spirit that is more inflammable than brandy, or common spirits of wine."

Geology was in its infancy during Franklin's time, but he hazarded some conjectures about the formation of the earth that are perhaps not less trustworthy than those advanced by riper geologists. In the letter, in which these conjectures were communicated to the Abbé Soulavie, he said:

Part of the high county of Derby being probably as much above the level of the sea, as the coal mines of Whitehaven were below it, seemed a proof that there had been a great *bouleversement* in the surface of that Island (Great Britain), some part of it having been depressed under the sea, and other parts which had been under it being raised above it. . . . Such changes in the superficial parts of the globe [he continued] seemed to me unlikely to happen if the earth were solid to the centre. I therefore imagined that the internal parts might be a fluid more dense, and of greater specific gravity than any of the solids we are acquainted with; which therefore might swim in or upon that fluid. Thus the surface of the globe would be a shell, capable of being broken and disordered by the violent movements of the fluid on which it rested.

The letter contains other speculations equally bold:

It has long been a supposition of mine that the iron contained in the substance of this globe, has made it capable of becoming as it is a great magnet. That the fluid of magnetism exists perhaps in all space; so that there is a magnetical North and South of the universe as well as of this globe, and that if it were possible for a man to fly from star to star, he might govern his course by the compass. That it was by the power of this general magnetism this globe became a particular magnet. In soft or hot iron the fluid of magnetism is naturally diffused equally; when within the influence of the magnet, it is drawn to one end of the Iron, made denser there, and rare at

the other, while the iron continues soft and hot, it is only a temporary magnet: If it cools or grows hard in that situation, it becomes a permanent one, the magnetic fluid not easily resuming its equilibrium. Perhaps it may be owing to the permanent magnetism of this globe, which it had not at first, that its axis is at present kept parallel to itself, and not liable to the changes it formerly suffered, which occasioned the rupture of its shell, the submersions and emersions of its lands and the confusion of its seasons.

It was probably, Franklin thought, different relations between the earth and its axis in the past that caused much of Europe, including the mountains of Passy, on which he lived, and which were composed of limestone rock and sea shells, to be abandoned by the sea, and to change its ancient climate, which seemed, he said, to have been a hot one.

The physical convulsions to which the earth had been subject in the past were, however, in his opinion beneficent.

Had [he said in a letter to Sir John Pringle] the different strata of clay, gravel, marble, coals, limestone, sand, minerals, &c., continued to lie level, one under the other, as they may be supposed to have done before these convulsions, we should have had the use only of a few of the uppermost of the strata, the others lying too deep and too difficult to be come at; but the shell of the earth being broke, and the fragments thrown into this oblique position, the disjointed ends of a great number of strata of different kinds are brought up to-day, and a great variety of useful materials put into our power, which would otherwise have remained eternally concealed from us. So that what has been usually looked upon as a *ruin* suffered by this part of the universe, was, in reality, only a preparation or means of rendering the earth more fit for use, more capable of being to mankind a convenient and comfortable habitation.

The scientific conjectures of Franklin may not always have been sound, but they are invariably so readable that we experience no difficulty in understanding why the Abbé Raynal should have preferred his fictions to other men's truths.

CHAPTER V

Franklin as a Writer

FRANKLIN, as Hume truly said, was the first great man of letters, for whom Great Britain was beholden to America, and, among his writings, are some that will always remain classics. But it is a mistake to think of him as in any sense a professional author. He was entirely accurate when he declared in the *Autobiography* that prose-writing had been of great use to him in the course of his life and a principal means of his advancement; but always to him a pen was but an implement of action. When it had accomplished its purpose, he threw it aside as a farmer discards a worn-out plowshare, or a horse casts a shoe.[1] There is nothing in his writings or his utterances to show that he ever regarded himself as a literary man, or ever harbored a thought of permanent literary fame. The only productions of his pen, which suggest the sandpaper and varnish of a professional writer, are his Bagatelles, such as *The Craven Street Gazette* and *The Ephemera*, composed for the amusement of his friends; and, in writing them, the idea of permanency was as completely absent from his mind as

[1] What Sir Walter Scott said of Jonathan Swift is as true of Franklin: "Swift executed his various and numerous works as a carpenter forms wedges, mallets, or other implements of his art, not with the purpose of distinguishing himself, by the workmanship bestowed on the tools themselves, but solely in order to render them fit for accomplishing a certain purpose, beyond which they were of no value in his eyes."

it was from that of the Duke of Crillon, when he sent up his balloon in honor of the two Spanish princes. The greater part of his writings were composed in haste, and published anonymously, and without revision. And, when once published, if they did not remain dispersed and neglected, it was only because their merits were too great for them not to be snatched from the "abhorred abyss of blank oblivion" by some disciple or friend of his, who had more regard for posterity than he had. So far as we are aware, no edition of his scientific essays or other writings was ever in the slightest degree prompted by any personal concern or request of his. As soon as the didactic purpose of the earlier chapters of the *Autobiography* had been gratified by the composition of those chapters, it was only by incessant proddings and importunities that he could be induced to bring his narrative down to as late a period as he did. When Lord Kames expressed a desire to have all his publications, the only ones on which he could lay his hands were the *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.*, the *Account of the New-invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces*, and some little magazine sketches. He had had, he wrote Lord Kames, daily expectations of procuring some of his performances from a friend to whom he had formerly sent them, when the author was in America, but this friend had at length told him that he could not find them. "Very mortifying this to an author," said Franklin, "that his works should so soon be lost!" When Jefferson called upon him, during his last days, he placed in the former's hands the valuable manuscript of his negotiations with Lord Howe, and it was not until he had twice told Jefferson to keep it, in reply to statements by Jefferson that he would return it, after reading it, that the recipient could realize that the intention was to turn over the manuscript to him absolutely. In a letter to Vaughan, he mentions that, after writing a

parable, probably that on Brotherly Love, he laid it aside and had not seen it for thirty years, when a lady, a few days before, furnished him with a copy that she had preserved.

The indifference of Franklin to literary reputation is all the more remarkable in view of the clearness with which he foresaw the increased patronage that the future had in store for English authors. "I assure you," he wrote on one occasion to Hume, "it often gives me pleasure to reflect, how greatly the *audience* (if I may so term it) of a good English writer will, in another century or two, be increased by the increase of English people in our colonies." Twenty-four years later, he had already lived long enough to see his prescience in this respect to no little extent verified.

> By the way [he wrote to William Strahan], the rapid Growth and extension of the English language in America, must become greatly Advantageous to the booksellers, and holders of Copy-Rights in England. A vast audience is assembling there for English Authors ancient, present, and future, our People doubling every twenty Years; and this will demand large and of course profitable Impressions of your most valuable Books. I would, therefore, if I possessed such rights, entail them, if such a thing be practicable, upon my Posterity; for their Worth will be continually augmenting.

This grave advice was followed by the jolly laugh that was never long absent from the intercourse between Franklin and Strahan. "This," Franklin said, "may look a little like Advice, and yet I have drank no *Madeira* these Ten Months."

The manner in which Franklin acquired the elements of his literary education is one of the inspiring things in the history of knowledge. At the age of ten, as we have seen, he was done forever with all schools except those of self-education and experience; but he had one of those

minds that simply will not be denied knowledge. Even while he was pouring tallow into his father's moulds, he was reading the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Burton's *Historical Collections*, "small chapmen's books, and cheap, 40 or 50 in all," Plutarch's *Lives*, Defoe's *Essay on Projects* and Cotton Mather's *Essay upon the Good that is to be Devised and Designed by those who desire to answer the Great end of Life, and to do Good while they Live;* all books full of wholesome and stimulating food for a hungry mind. Happily for him, his propensity for reading found ampler scope when his father bound him over as an apprentice to James Franklin. Here he had access to better books.

An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers [he tells us in the *Autobiography*] enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted.

This clandestine use of what did not belong to him or to his obliging young friends was an illicit enjoyment; but was one of those offences, we may be sure, for which the Recording Angel has an expunging tear. More legitimate was the use that he made of the volumes lent to him by Mr. Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, and who frequented the printing-house, took notice of him and invited him to his library, and very kindly lent him such books as he chose to read. As we have seen, it was not long before Benjamin struck a bargain with his brother, by which the obligation of the latter to board him was commuted into a fixed weekly sum, which, though only half what had been previously paid by James for his weekly board, proved large enough to afford the boy a fund for buying books with. Not only under this

arrangement did he contrive to save for this purpose one half of the sum allowed him by James but also to secure an additional margin of time for reading.

My brother and the rest [Franklin tells us in the *Autobiography*] going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast, which often was no more than a bisket or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry-cook's, and a glass of water, had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking.

Then it was that he read Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* and the *Art of Thinking* by "Messrs. du Port Royal." To the same period belongs his provoking dalliance with the Socratic method of reasoning.

From reading the works of others to what Sir Fopling Flutter called "the natural sprouts" of one's own brain is always but a short step for a clever and ambitious boy. Franklin's first literary ventures were metrical ones, the lispings that filled the mind of his uncle Benjamin with such glowing anticipations, and "some little pieces" which excited the commercial instincts of James Franklin to the point of putting Benjamin to composing occasional ballads. The subject of one ballad, *The Light House Tragedy*, was the death by drowning of Captain Worthilake and his two daughters; another ballad was a sailor's song on the taking of Teach (or Blackbeard), the flagitious pirate. The opinion of these ballads held by Franklin is probably just enough, if we may judge by his subsequent irruptions into the province of Poetry.

They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-Street-ballad style [he says in the *Autobiography*], and when they were printed he (James Franklin) sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being recent, having

made a great noise. This flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one.

From the doggerel, thus condemned by the hard head of Josiah, Benjamin turned to prose. Believing that in oral discussion with his friend Collins on the qualifications of women for learning, he had been borne down rather by the fluency than the logic of his antagonist, he reduced his arguments to writing, copied them in a fair hand and sent them to Collins. He replied, and Franklin rejoined, and no less than three or four letters had been addressed by each of the friends to the other when the correspondence happened to fall under the eye of Josiah. Again the son had reason to be thankful for the candid discernment of the father, for Josiah pointed out to him that, while he had the advantage of Collins in correct spelling and pointing (thanks to the printing-house) he fell far short of Collins in elegance of expression, method and perspicuity, all of which he illustrated by references to the correspondence.

The son realized the justice of the father's criticisms, and resolved to amend his faults. The means to which he resorted he has laid before us in the *Autobiography:*

About this time [he says] I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I

found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales, and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavoured to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method of the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extreamly ambitious. My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still thought a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it.

The next step in Benjamin's literary development was when he contrived to disguise his handwriting and thrust the first of his Silence Dogood letters under the door of his brother's printing-house; and we can readily imagine what his feelings were when the group of contributors to the *Courant*, who frequented the place, read it and commented on it, in his hearing, and afforded him what he terms in the *Autobiography* the exquisite pleasure of

finding that it met with their approbation; and that in their different guesses at the author none were named but men of some character in the town for learning and ingenuity. Encouraged by his success, he wrote and communicated to the *Courant* in the same furtive way the other letters in the Silence Dogood series, keeping his secret, he tells us, until his small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, when he disclosed his authorship, only to arouse the jealousy of the churlish brother, who, alone of the *Courant* circle, failed to regard him with augmented respect. If there was no extrinsic evidence to fix the authorship of the Dogood letters, their intrinsic characteristics, incipient as they are, would be enough to disclose the hand of Franklin. The good dame, who finally succumbed to the rhetoric of her reverend master and protector, after he had made several fruitless attempts on the more topping part of her sex, bears very much the same family lineaments as the Anthony Afterwit and Alice Addertongue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Deprived of her good husband by inexorable death, when her sun was in its meridian altitude, she proceeds to gratify her natural inclination for observing and reproving the faults of others, and to open up her mind in a way that leaves us little room for doubt as to who the lively, free-spirited and free-spoken boy was that she concealed beneath her petticoats. "A hearty Lover of the Clergy and all good Men, and a mortal Enemy to arbitrary Government & unlimited Power," she was, she assures us in one letter, besides being courteous and affable, good-humored (unless first provoked) and handsome, and sometimes witty. In her next paper, she tells us that she had from her youth been indefatigably studious to gain and treasure up in her mind all useful and desirable knowledge, especially such as tends to improve the mind and enlarge the understanding. With this frontispiece, she, from time time, delivers her views

on various topics with glib vivacity, set off by Latin quotations. In one letter, she falls asleep in her usual place of retirement under the Great Apple Tree, and is transported in a dream to the Temple of Learning (Harvard College), which we can only hope was not quite so bad as it appeared to be when seen through the distorting medium of her slumbers. Describing the concourse of outgoing students, she says, "SOME I perceiv'd took to Merchandizing, others to Travelling, some to one Thing, some to another, and some to Nothing; and many of them from henceforth, for want of Patrimony, liv'd as poor as church Mice, being unable to dig, and asham'd to beg, and to live by their Wits it was impossible." In another letter, Silence unsparingly lashes the existing system of female education. "Their Youth," she says, borrowing the words of an "ingenious writer," is spent to teach them to stitch and sow, or make Baubles. They are taught to read indeed and perhaps to write their Names, or so; and that is the Heigth of a Womans Education."

In another letter, she holds up hoop-petticoats to laughter. If a number of them, she declared, were well mounted on Noddle's Island, they would look more like engines of war for bombarding the town than ornaments of the fair sex; and she concludes by asking her sex, "whether they, who pay no Rates or Taxes, ought to take up more Room in the King's Highway, than the Men, who yearly contribute to the Support of the Government."

Another letter makes unmerciful fun of an Elegy upon the much Lamented Death of Mrs. Mehitebell Kitel, the wife of Mr. John Kitel, of Salem etc.

Two lines,

> "Come let us mourn, for we have lost a
> Wife, a Daughter, and a Sister,"

affords Silence an opportunity for some merry satire. Contrasting these lines with Dr. Watts'

"GUNSTON the Just, the Generous, and the Young,"

she says:

> The latter (Watts) only mentions three Qualifications of *one* Person who was deceased, which therefore could raise Grief and Compassion but for *One*. Whereas the former, (*our most excellent Poet*) gives his Reader a Sort of an Idea of the Death of *Three Persons*, viz.
>
> —a Wife, a Daughter, and a Sister,
>
> which is *Three Times* as great a Loss as the Death of *One*, and consequently must raise *Three Times* as much Grief and Compassion in the Reader.

It was a pity, Silence added, that such an excellent piece should not be dignified with a particular name. Seeing that it could not justly be called either *Epic*, *Saphhic*, *Lyric* or *Pindaric*, nor any other name yet invented, she presumed it might (in honour and remembrance of the dead) be called the Kitelic.

The next letter on freedom of speech was, or purported to be, an extract from the *London Journal*, and is written in such a totally masculine spirit that the reader might well have exclaimed like Hugh Evans in the *Merry Wives of Windsor:* "I like not when a 'oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler." This is one of its masculine sentiments: "Who ever would overthrow the Liberty of a Nation, must begin by subduing the Freeness of Speech; a *Thing* Terrible to Publick Traytors."

And this is another, phrased very much as Grover Cleveland might have phrased it. "The Administration of Government is nothing else but the Attendance of the *Trustees of the People* upon the Interest and Affairs of the People."

The next letter inveighs against hypocritical pretenders to religion. It had for some time, Silence says, been a

question with her whether a commonwealth suffers more by hypocritical pretenders to religion, or by the openly profane; but she is inclined to think that the hypocrite is the most dangerous person of the two, especially if he sustains a post in the Government, and his conduct is considered as it regards the public. The local application of these remarks to Boston at the time could be left to take care of itself.

The next letter gives us another peep under Silence's petticoats, for it advances a plan for the insurance of widows, worked out with actuarial precision, and bearing the unmistakable earmarks of the projecting spirit of the founder of the Junto. "For my own Part," Silence ends, "I have nothing left to live on, but Contentment and a few Cows"; and tho' I cannot expect to be reliev'd by this Project, yet it would be no small Satisfaction to me to See it put in Practice for the Benefit of Others."

The next letter contains a missive from Margaret After cast, a forlorn Virgin, well stricken in years and repentance, to Silence, in which the writer, prompted by the provision for widows proposed by Silence, begs her to form a project also for the relief of "all those penitent Mortals of the fair Sex, that are like to be punish'd with their Virginity until old Age, for the Pride and Insolence of their Youth."

The next letter is a clever discourse on drunkenness. It hints at the truth that Franklin afterwards insisted upon in the "Dialogue between Horatio and Philocles" that we must stint sensual pleasure really to enjoy it, and sets forth a vocabulary of cant terms for intoxication similar to that subsequently published by him in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

The next letter is on the forbidding subject of night-walkers. The familiarity that it exhibits with the peripatetic side of Boston Common after dark at that day makes it a little difficult for us to understand why Frank-

lin should ever have had occasion to tell us in the *Autobiography*, as he does, how on his second voyage from Boston to New York, a grave, sensible, matronlike Quakeress rescued him from the clutches of two young women, who afterwards proved to be a couple of thievish strumpets.

The final letter in the series is on the danger of religious zeal, if immoderate.

We have referred to these letters at some length, not only because they are not too immature to be even now read with pleasure for their wit and humor, but because they help to give us a still more faithful idea of the rebellious youth of Franklin, which, if it had not been so full of scornful protest against the whole system of New England Puritanism, might have shaded off, with the chastening effects of time, into too passive a type of liberalism for such a career as his.

From the Dogood letters Benjamin passed as we have seen to the editorship of the *Courant* and to the gibes at the Boston clergy and magistracy, which ended in his ignominious flight from that city. But never was there a time in his youth, however restive under the check-rein, when his love of books was not the chief resource of his life. When on his return from Boston to Philadelphia, after receiving his father's blessing, it was the fact that he had a great many books with him which led Governor Burnet of New York to send for him, and to show him his large library, and to discourse with him at considerable length about books and authors. He had previously begun to have "some acquaintance among the young people" of Philadelphia "that were lovers of reading," and subsequently came those academic strolls with Osborne, Watson and Ralph through the woods along the Schuylkill. And later even London, with all its tumult and dissipation, could not long extinguish his thirst for the sweet, cool wells of human thought and sentiment from which the soul

of a gifted boy drinks with such passionate eagerness. Circulating libraries were unknown at that time, but he agreed on reasonable terms with Wilcox, a bookseller, with an immense collection of second-hand books, whose shop was next door to his place of lodging in Little Britain, that he might take home and read and return any of his wares. We have already quoted the passages in the *Autobiography* in which he tells us that, during the eighteen months that he was in London in his youth, he spent little upon himself except in seeing plays, and for books; and that he read considerably.

The *Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, which he wrote while in London, of little value as it was in itself, yet also aided in confirming his literary tendencies; for it arrested the attention of Lyons, the author of *The Infallibility of Human Judgment*, who introduced him to Bernard Mandeville, the author of the *Fable of the Bees*, "a most facetious, entertaining companion," and Dr. Henry Pemberton, the author of *A View of Sir I. Newton's Philosophy*.

The love of reading, thus acquired by Franklin in early life, never deserted him, and was afterwards strengthened by his own ever-increasing library, which, before his death, became so large that he had to build a spacious room for its reception at his home in Philadelphia, the books owned by the other members of the Junto, the extensive library of James Logan at Stenton, and the collections of the Philadelphia Library Company. Even when his private business was too exacting to allow him time for any other form of recreation, he still found time for reading, including the acquirement of several modern languages, and the consequence was that, when he began to write in earnest, he was well supplied with all the materials for literary workmanship.

While Franklin never became a professional writer, he was very scrupulous about the typographical dress of what

he wrote and not a little of a purist in his choice of words. Nor does he seem to have been less averse than authors usually are to editorial mutilation. Among his letters is one to Woodfall, the printer of Junius' Letters, asking him to take care that the compositor observed "strictly the Italicking, Capitalling and Pointing" of the copy enclosed with the letter. Referring in a letter to William Franklin to a reprint in the *London Chronicle* of his "Edict by the King of Prussia," he said:

> It is reprinted in the *Chronicle*, where you will see it, but stripped of all the capitaling and italicing, that intimate the allusions and mark the emphasis of written discourses, to bring them as near as possible to those spoken: printing such a piece all in one even small character, seems to me like repeating one of Whitefield's sermons in the monotony of a schoolboy.

On another occasion he was led by the alterations made in the text of one of his papers to write to William Franklin in these terms: "The editor of that paper, one Jones, seems a Grenvillian, or is very cautious, as you will see by his corrections and omissions. He has drawn the teeth and pared the nails of my paper, so that it can neither scratch nor bite."

Among the many delightful letters of Franklin is one that he wrote in his extreme old age to Noah Webster, acknowledging the receipt of a copy of the latter's *Dissertations on the English Language*, and applauding his zeal for preserving the purity of the English language both in its expressions and pronunciation; and in correcting the popular errors into which several of the States were continually falling with respect to both. In this letter, the writer again takes occasion to reprobate the use in New England of the word "improved" in the sense of "employed." The word in that signification appears to have been decidedly obnoxious to him, for he had previously banned it in a letter to Jared Eliot. Among the ludicrous

instances that he gave in his letter to Webster of its use in its perverted sense was an obituary statement to the effect that a certain deceased country gentleman had been for more than thirty years *improved* as a justice of the peace. He also found, he said, that, during his absence in France, several newfangled words had been introduced into the parliamentary vocabulary of America, such as the verb formed from the substantive "Notice," as "*I should not have NOTICED this, were it not that the Gentleman,* &c," the verb formed from the substantive "Advocate," as "*the Gentleman who ADVOCATES or has ADVOCATED that Motion,* &c.," and the verb formed from the substantive "progress," the most awkward and abominable of the three, as "*the committee, having PROGRESSED resolved to adjourn.*" He also found that the word "opposed," though not a new word, was used in a new manner, as "*the Gentlemen who are OPPOSED to this Measure.*" From these verbal criticisims he passed to the advantages that had inured to the French language from obtaining the universal currency in Europe previously enjoyed by Latin. It was perhaps, he thought, owing to the fact that Voltaire's treatise on Toleration was written in French that it had exerted so sudden and so great an effect on the bigotry of Europe as almost entirely to disarm it. The English language bid fair to occupy a place only second to that of the French, and the effort therefore should be to relieve it still more of all the difficulties, however small, which discouraged its more general diffusion. A book, ill-printed, or a pronunciation in speaking, not well articulated, would render a sentence unintelligible, which from a clear print, or a distinct speaker, would have been immediately comprehended.

Instead of diminishing, however, the obstacles to the extension of the English language, Franklin declared, had increased. The practice, for illustration, of beginning

all substantives with a capital letter, which had done so much to promote intelligibility, had been laid aside. And so, from the same fondness for an even and uniform appearance, had been the practice of italicizing important words, or words which should be emphasized when read. Another innovation was the use of the short round *s* instead of the long one which had formerly served so well to distinguish a word readily by its varied aspect. Certainly the omission of these prominent letters made the line appear more even, but it rendered it less immediately legible; as the paring all men's noses might smooth and level their faces, but would render their physiognomies less distinguishable. All these, Franklin said, were improvements backwards, and classed with them too should be the modern fancy that gray printing—read with difficulty by old eyes—unless in a very strong light and with good glasses, was more beautiful than black. A comparison between a volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, printed between the years 1731 and 1740, and one printed in the last ten years would demonstrate the contrary. Lord Chesterfield pleasantly remarked this difference to Faulkener, the printer of the *Dublin Journal*, when he was vainly making encomiums on his own paper as the most complete of any in the world. "But, Mr. Faulkener," said my Lord, "don't you think it might be still farther improved by using Paper and Ink not quite so near of a Colour"? Another point in favor of clear and distinct printing was that it afforded the eye, when it was being read aloud, an opportunity to take a look forward in time to supply the voice with the proper modulations for coming words. But, if words were obscurely printed or disguised by omitting the capitals and the long *s*, or otherwise, the reader was apt to modulate wrong, and, finding that he had done so, would be obliged to go back, and begin the sentence again, with a loss of pleasure to his hearers.

Two features, however, of the old system of printing did not meet with the approval of Franklin. It was absurd to place the interrogation point at the end of a sentence where it is not descried until it is too late for the inflection of interrogation to be given. The practice of the Spanish of putting this point at the beginning of the sentence was more sensible. The same reasoning was applicable to the practice of putting the stage direction "aside" at the end of a sentence.

Nice, however, as were the prejudices of Franklin with respect to the use of words, some of his own did not escape the vigilant purism of Hume, who, notwithstanding his admiration for Franklin, as the first great man of letters produced by America, was, where fastidious diction was concerned, not unlike John Randolph of Roanoke, whose exquisite fidelity to correct English impelled him even on his death-bed, when asked whether he *lay* easily, to reply with marked emphasis, "I *lie* as easily as a dying man can." After reading Franklin's Canada pamphlet and essay on Population, Hume took exception to several of his expressions; as is shown by one of the latter's letters to him.

I thank you [wrote Franklin] for your friendly admonition relating to some unusual words in the pamphlet. It will be of service to me. The "*pejorate*" and the "*colonize*," since they are not in common use here, I give up as bad; for certainly in writings intended for persuasion and for general information, one can not be too clear; and every expression in the least obscure is a fault. The "*unshakeable*" too, though clear, I give up as rather low. The introducing new words, where we are already possessed of old ones sufficiently expressive, I confess must be generally wrong, as it tends to change the language; yet, at the same time, I can not but wish the usage of our tongue permitted making new words, when we want them, by composition of old ones whose meanings are already well understood. The German allows of it, and it is a common

practice with their writers. Many of our present English words were originally so made; and many of the Latin words. In point of clearness, such compound words would have the advantage of any we can borrow from the ancient or from foreign languages. For instance, the word *inaccessible*, though long in use among us, is not yet, I dare say, so universally understood by our people, as the word *uncomeatable* would immediately be, which we are not allowed to write. But I hope with you, that we shall always in America make the best English of this Island our standard, and I believe it will be so.

Franklin has left behind him his own conception of what constitutes a good piece of writing.

To be good [he says] it ought to have a tendency to benefit the reader, by improving his virtue or his knowledge. But, not regarding the intention of the author, the method should be just; that is, it should proceed regularly from things known to things unknown, distinctly and clearly without confusion. The words used should be the most expressive that the language affords, provided that they are the most generally understood. Nothing should be expressed in two words that can be as well expressed in one; that is, no synonymes should be used, or very rarely, but the whole should be as short as possible, consistent with clearness; the words should be so placed as to be agreable to the ear in reading; summarily it should be smooth, clear and short, for the contrary qualities are displeasing.

Though entirely familiar, as we know from one of his letters, with the fate that befell Gil Blas, when he was so imprudent as to comply with the invitation of his master, the Archbishop, Franklin did not shrink from the peril of telling Benjamin Vaughan at his request what the faults of his writings were; and the terms in which he performed this delicate and hazardous office were suggested in part at least by his own methods of composition.

Your language [he told Vaughan] seems to me to be good and pure, and your sentiments generally just; but your style of composition wants perspicuity, and this I think owing principally to a neglect of method. What I would therefore recommend to you is, that, before you sit down to write on any subject, you would spend some days in considering it, putting down at the same time, in short hints, every thought which occurs to you as proper to make a part of your intended piece. When you have thus obtained a collection of the thoughts, examine them carefully with this view, to find which of them is properest to be presented *first* to the mind of the reader that he, being possessed of that, may the more easily understand it, and be better disposed to receive what you intend for the *second;* and thus I would have you put a figure before each thought, to mark its future place in your composition. For so, every preceding proposition preparing the mind for that which is to follow, and the reader often anticipating it, he proceeds with ease, and pleasure, and approbation, as seeming continually to meet with his own thoughts. In this mode you have a better chance for a perfect production; because the mind attending first to the sentiments alone, next to the method alone, each part is likely to be better performed, and I think too in less time.

The writings of Franklin as a whole were true to his literary ideals, for they are, as a rule, smooth, clear and short; and the paper of preliminary hints that he drew up for the composition of the *Autobiography* was in accord with his advice to Vaughan in regard to the value of such aids to perspicuity. His familiar letters, agreeable as they are, bear evidence at times of haste and lack of revision, and even his more informal writings, other than letters, occasionally betray a certain sort of carelessness of construction and expression. This is conspicuously true of the *Autobiography*, and, indeed, it is one of the merits of that work, so perfectly is it in keeping with its easy, meandering narrative. But, generally speaking, the compositions of Franklin are fully in harmony with his best standards of literary accomplishment. They are flowing and eupho-

nious, moving with a steady, smooth and sometimes powerful, current from things known to things unknown, distinctly and lucidly without confusion. They are as clear as a trout stream. If one of his sentences is read a second time, it is not for his meaning, but merely for a renewal of the gratification that the mind derives from a thought presented free from the slightest trace of intercepting obscurity. They are so concise that the endeavor to make an abstract of one of them is likely to result in a sacrifice of brevity. But smoothness, clearness and brevity are far from being the only merits of Franklin's writings. He was not richly endowed with imagination; though he was by no means destitute of that sovereign faculty; placid and sober as the ordinary operations of his mind were. But Fancy, the graceful sister of Imagination, Invention, Wit and Humor, and remarkable powers of statement and reasoning, all, except humor in its more wayward moods, under the complete sway of a sound judgment, gave life and strength to almost all that he wrote. His similes and metaphors are often strikingly original and apt; never more so than when they light up with a sudden flash the dark core of some abstruse scientific problem. A vivacity of spirits that nothing could long depress, accompanied by a quick but kindly sense of the ludicrous rises like bubbles of mellow wine to the surface of his intimate letters, and other lighter compositions; and, when associated with conceptions lured from the bright heaven of invention, and elaborated with the utmost finish, as in the case of his Bagatelles, imparts to his productions a quality that does not belong to any but the best creations of literary genius. It is interesting to note how even the most intractable subject, the new-invented Pennsylvania fireplace, smoky chimneys, interest calculations become suffused with some sort of intellectual charm, born of absolute transparency of speech, if nothing else, as soon as they pass through the luminous

and tapestried cells of his spacious mind. That mind, indeed, like all minds of the same comprehensive character, in which the balance has not been lost between the subjective and objective faculties, was prone to see everything in large pictorial outlines. Fable, epilogue, parable, a story that was not so much the jest of a moment as the wisdom of all time, a historical incident, that pointed some grave moral, or enforced some invaluable truth, came naturally to his mind as they might well do to the minds of all men who are creed-founders, or teachers, in any sense, on a large scale, of the mass of men, as he was. How naturally such methods of instruction belonged to him is well illustrated in the story told of him by John Adams. One evening, at a social gathering, shortly before he left England, at the close of his second mission to that country, a gentleman expressed the opinion that writers like Æsop and La Fontaine had exhausted the resources of fable. Franklin, so far from concurring with this view, declared that many new and instructive fables could still be invented, and, when asked whether he could think of one, replied that, if he was furnished with pen and paper, he would produce one forthwith. The pen and paper were handed to him, and, in a few minutes, he summed up the existing relations between England and America in this fable:

Once upon a time, an eagle, scaling round a farmer's barn, and espying a hare, darted down upon him like a sunbeam, seized him in his claws, and remounted with him in the air. He soon found that he had a creature of more courage and strength than a hare; for which, notwithstanding the keenness of his eyesight, he had mistaken a cat. The snarling and scrambling of the prey was very inconvenient; and, what was worse, she had disengaged herself from his talons, grasped his body with her four limbs, so as to stop his breath, and seized fast hold of his throat with her teeth. "Pray," said the eagle, "let go your hold, and I will release you." "Very

fine," said the cat, "I have no fancy to fall from this height, and be crushed to death. You have taken me up, and you shall stoop, and let me down." The eagle thought it necessary to stoop accordingly.

In the course of the preceding pages, we have had occasion to refer at considerable length to not a few of Franklin's writings, but by no means to all. Among the best of his published pamphlets, is the one entitled *The Interest of Great Britain considered with regard to her Colonies and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadaloupe.* Remarkable as it may now seem, when the peace of 1763 between Great Britain and France was approaching, there was some division of opinion in the former country as to whether she should insist upon the cession by France to her of Canada or Guadeloupe, then one of the rich sugar islands of the West Indies; and the object of this pamphlet was to establish the superior claims of Canada. It is written with great lucidity and force of argument, and is especially valuable for its revelations of the extent to which the acquisition of Canada by England was opposed in England for fear that it would tend to augment the power and precipitate the independence of the American Colonies. Richard Jackson is alleged to have had a share in its composition, exactly what Benjamin Vaughan was unable to say after a careful investigation before the publication of his edition of Franklin's writings in 1779. For our part, we find it difficult to believe that he could have had any considerable share in its production. Internal evidences of authorship are undoubtedly misleading, but it is hard to read this paper, so similar to Franklin's other pamphlets in point of peculiarities of diction and method without exclaiming, "St. Dunstan or the Devil!" Its intimate, nay perfect, familiarity with Indian habits and characteristics could not well have been possessed by anyone who had never personally mixed with the Indians,

and formed his knowledge of them from his own and other first-hand information. The arguments, too, employed in the pamphlet to allay English jealousy of colonial aggrandizement, are the same that are found scattered through Franklin's other writings. There is also the fact that the authorship of the paper is referred to in the paper itself throughout in the first person singular. There is also the fact that in the same letter to Hume, in which Franklin disclaims the authorship of the *Historical Review*, he told him, in reply to one of his criticisms, that he gave up as rather low the word "unshakeable," used in the Canada pamphlet, but said nothing to indicate that the pamphlet was not wholly his own. More conclusive are the words in the paper of hints upon which the composition of the *Autobiography* was based. "*Canada delenda est.* My Pamphlet. Its reception and effect." Certainly a man, whose relations to his own productions were always marked by an uncommon degree of modesty, if not of indifference, and whose generosity in awarding due credit to the labors of others was one of his most striking and laudable qualities, was scarcely the man to have used such words as these about a pamphlet, mainly or largely the work of another hand. There is besides the fact that the Franklin collection of the Pennsylvania Historical Society contains a copy of the pamphlet indorsed in the handwriting of Franklin as presented "to the Rev. Dr. Mayhew, from his humble servt, the Author."

In view of these circumstances we should say that the probabilities decidedly are that the connection of Jackson with the pamphlet, whatever it may have been, was of a purely subordinate character.

The papers, written by Franklin from time to time during the controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies, before the sword grew too impatient to remain in its scabbard, such as his letters to the *London Chronicle* and the *London Public Advertiser*, his Answers to Strahan's

Queries respecting American Affairs, his essay on *Toleration in Old England and New England*, his *Tract relative to the Affair of Hutchinson's Letters*, and his *Account of Negotiations in London for effecting a Reconciliation between Great Britain and the American Colonies* were, taken as a whole, pamphleteering or narration of a very interesting and effective order. The substance of the majority of them is found in his Examination before the House of Commons, as the quintessence of most that is best in *Poor Richard's Almanac* is found in Father Abraham's Speech. They are written, as a rule, in a singularly clear and readable style, present with unusual skill and cogency all the points of the colonial argument, and display the insight of an almost faultlessly honest and sane intelligence into the true obligations and interests of the mother country and her disaffected children. Among these graver productions, Franklin also contributed to the American controversy, in addition to the humorous letter to the press, in which he held up to English ignorance of America, as one of the finest spectacles in nature, the grand leap of the whale, in his chase of the cod up Niagara Falls, two papers worthy of the satirical genius of Swift. One is his *Edict by the King of Prussia* and the other is his *Rules by Which a Great Empire May be Reduced to a Small One*. In the first piece, Frederick the Great is gravely credited with an edict, in which, after reciting that Great Britain was colonized in the beginning by subjects of his renowned ducal ancestors, led by Hengist, Horsa, Hella, Uff, Cerdicus, Ida and others, he proceeds to impose *seriatim* upon the English descendants of these German colonists in terms, exactly like those employed by the prohibitory and restrictive statutes of Great Britain, bearing upon the commerce and industry of America, all the disabilities and burdens under which America labored. The parallel is sustained with unbroken spirit and the happiest irony from beginning to

end. After all the manacles by which the freedom of America was restrained have been duly fastened by the arbitrary mandates of the edict upon Great Britain herself, it concludes with these words:

We flatter ourselves, that these our royal regulations and commands will be thought just and reasonable by our much-favoured colonists in England; the said regulations being copied from their statutes of 10 and 11 William III. c. 10, 5 Geo. II. c. 22, 23 Geo. II. c. 29, 4 Geo. I. c. 11, and from other equitable laws made by their parliaments; or from instructions given by their Princes; or from resolutions of both Houses, entered into for the good government of their *own colonies in Ireland and America.*

The second paper commences in this manner:

"An ancient Sage boasted, that, tho' he could not fiddle, he knew how to make a *great city* of a *little one.* The science that I, a modern simpleton, am about to communicate, is the very reverse." Then, assuming as a postulate that a great empire, like a great cake, is most easily diminished at the edges, the paper goes on to point out one by one as the best means for reducing such an empire to a small one the very British policies and abuses that were then producing incurable disaffection in the mind of America, and menacing the power and prestige of Great Britain herself. These two papers, though clothed in forms that belong to literature rather than to politics, assert the whole case of the Colonies against Great Britain almost, if not altogether, as fully as the Declaration of Independence afterwards did. They have in every respect the polished completeness given by Franklin to all the productions of his pen that called for the exercise of true literary art, and deserve to be included in any separate publication of the best creations of his literary genius. They both met with the popular favor that they merited. The Rules was read with such eagerness that it was reprinted in the *Public Advertiser* at the request of

many individuals and some associations of individuals, and this notwithstanding the fact that it had been copied in several other newspapers and *The Gentleman's Magazine*. So great was the demand for the issue of the *Advertiser*, in which the Edict appeared, that, the day after its appearance, Franklin's clerk could obtain but two copies of it, though he endeavored to obtain more both at the office of the *Advertiser* and elsewhere. Its authorship being unknown except to a few of the writer's friends, he had the pleasure besides, he tells us, of hearing it spoken of in the highest terms as the keenest and severest piece that had been published in London for a long time. Lord Mansfield, he was informed, said of it that it was very able and artful indeed, and would do mischief by giving in England a bad impression of the measures of government, and in the Colonies by encouraging them in their contumacy. Among the persons taken in by its apparent genuineness was Paul Whitehead.

I was down at Lord Le Despencer's [Franklin wrote to William Franklin] when the post brought that day's papers. Mr. Whitehead was there, too, (Paul Whitehead, the author of *Manners*,) who runs early through all the papers, and tells the company what he finds remarkable. He had them in another room, and we were chatting in the breakfast parlour, when he came running in to us, out of breath, with the paper in his hand. Here! says he, here's news for ye! *Here's the King of Prussia, claiming a right to this kingdom!* All stared, and I as much as anybody; and he went on to read it. When he had read two or three paragraphs, a gentleman present said, *Damn his impudence, I dare say, we shall hear by next post that he is upon his march with one hundred thousand men to back this.* Whitehead who is very shrewd, soon after began to smoke it, and looking in my face said, *I'll be hanged if this is not some of your American jokes upon us.* The reading went on, and ended with abundance of laughing, and a general verdict that it was a fair hit; and the piece was cut out of the paper and preserved in My Lord's collection.

There are some humorous passages in other contributions made by Franklin, in one assumed character or another, to the American controversy. The dialogue as well as the fable was, as the reader is aware, one of his striking methods of arresting popular attention when he wished to make an impression upon the popular mind. In an anonymous letter to the *Public Advertiser*, he undertook to defend Dr. Franklin from the charge of ingratitude to the Ministry, which had, it was alleged, given him the Post Office of America, offered him a post of five hundred a year in the Salt Office, if he would relinquish the interests of his country and made his son a colonial governor. As it was a settled point in government in England that every man had his price, it was plain, the letter declared, that the English Ministers were bunglers in their business, and had not given him enough. Their Master had as much reason to be angry with them as Rodrigue in the play with his apothecary for not effectually poisoning Pandolpho, and they must probably make use of the Apothecary's Justification, as urged in the following colloquy:

SCENE IV. *Rodrigue* and *Fell*, the Apothecary

Rodrigue. You promised to have this Pandolpho upon his Bier in less than a Week; 'tis more than a Month since, and he still walks and stares me in the face.

Fell. True and yet I have done my best Endeavours. In various ways I have given the Miscreant as much Poison as would have kill'd an Elephant. He has swallow'd Dose after Dose; far from hurting him, he seems the better for it. He hath a wonderfully strong Constitution. I find I can not kill him but by cutting his Throat, and that, as I take it, is not my Business.

Rodrigue. Then it must be mine.

Another letter, signed "A Londoner," illustrates the difficulty which the sober good-sense of Franklin, always

disposed to reduce things to their material terms, experienced in understanding the recklessness with which the British Government was hazarding the commercial value of the colonies.

> To us in the Way of Trade comes now, and has long come [he said] all the superlucration arising from their Labours. But will our reviling them as Cheats, Hypocrites, Scoundrels, Traitors, Cowards, Tyrants, &c., &c., according to the present Court Mode in all our Papers, make them more our Friends, more fond of our Merchandise? Did ever any Tradesmen succeed, who attempted to drub Customers into his Shop? And will honest JOHN BULL, the Farmer, be long satisfied with Servants, that before his Face attempt to kill his *Plow Horses?*

In his eager desire to influence public sentiment in England in behalf of the Colonies, Franklin even devised and distributed a rude copper plate engraving, visualizing the woful condition to which Great Britain would be reduced, if she persisted in her harsh and unwise conduct towards her colonies. Many impressions of this engraving were struck off at his request on the cards which he occasionally used in writing his notes, and the design he also had printed for circulation on half sheets of paper with an explanation and a moral of his composition. The details of the illustration, which are all duly elucidated in the explanation, are those of abject and irredeemable ruin. The limbs of Britannia, labelled Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York and New England respectively, lie scattered about her, and she herself, with her eyes and arm stumps, uplifted to Heaven, is seen sliding off the globe, with a streamer inscribed *Date Obolum Bellisario* thrown across all that remains of her legs. Her shield, which she is unable to handle, lies useless by her side. The leg, labelled New England, has been transfixed by her lance. The hand of the arm, labelled Pennsylvania, has released its grasp upon a small spray of laurel. The English oak

has lost its crown, and stands a bare trunk with briars and thorns at its feet, and a single dry branch sticks out from its side. In the background are Britannia's ships with brooms at their topmastheads denoting that they are for sale. The moral of the whole was that the Thames and the Ohio, Edinburgh and Dublin were all one, and that invidious discriminations in favor of one part of the Empire to the prejudice of the rest could not fail to be attended with the most disastrous consequences to the whole State.

Nothing produced by Franklin between the date of his return from his second mission to England and his departure from America for France needs to be noticed. The two or three papers from his pen, which belong to this period, are distinctly below his ordinary standards of composition. Nor are any of the graver writings composed by him during the remainder of his life with some exceptions very noteworthy. In one, his comparison of Great Britain and the United States in regard to the basis of credit in the two countries, he presented with no little ability the proposition that, by reason of general industry, frugality, ability, prudence and virtue, America was a much safer debtor than Britain; to say nothing of the satisfaction that generous minds were bound to feel in reflecting that by loans to America they were opposing tyranny, and aiding the cause of liberty, which was the cause of all mankind. The object of this paper was to forward the loan of two millions of pounds sterling that the United States were desirous of procuring abroad. Unfortunately, the matter was one not to be settled by argument but by the Bourse, which has a barometric reasoning of its own. In another paper, thrown into the form of a catechism, Franklin, by a series of clever questions and answers, brings to the attention of the world the fact that it would take one hundred and forty-eight years, one hundred and nine days and twenty-two

hours for a man to count the English national debt, though he counted at the rate of one hundred shillings per minute, during twelve hours of each day. That the shillings, making up this enormous sum, would weigh sixty-one millions, seven hundred and fifty-two thousand, four hundred and seventy-six Troy pounds, that it would take three hundred and fourteen ships, of one hundred tons each, or thirty-one thousand, four hundred and fifty-two carts to move them, and that, if laid close together in a straight line, they would stretch more than twice around the circumference of the earth, are other facts elicited by the questions of the catechism. It concludes in this manner:

Q. When will government be able to pay the principal?

A. When there is more money in England's treasury than there is in all Europe.

Q. And when will that be?

A. Never.

This was very ingenious and clever, and has been imitated a hundred times over since by *ad captandum* statisticians, but it needed an interest default on the part of John Bull to make it effective.

Franklin's conceit in the Edict that Saxony was as much the mother country of England as England was of America was, it must be admitted, made to do rather more than its share of service. It reappeared in his *Vindication and Offer from Congress to Parliament*, when, in repelling the charge that America was ungrateful to England, he said that there was much more reason for retorting that charge on Britain which not only never contributed any aid, nor afforded, by an exclusive commerce, any advantages, to Saxony, *her* mother country, but no longer since than the last war, without the least provocation, subsidized the King of Prussia, while he ravaged that mother country, and carried fire and sword into its capital, the fine City of Dresden.

The same conceit also reappeared a second time in the *Dialogue between Britain, France, Spain, Holland, Saxony and America*, which he wrote soon after he arrived in France as one of our envoys. In this lively dialogue, Britain beseeches Spain, France and Holland successively not to supply America with arms. Spain reminds her of her intervention in behalf of the Dutch, and expresses surprise at her impudence. France reminds her of her intervention in behalf of the Huguenots, and tells her that she must be a little silly, and Holland ends by informing her defiantly that, with the prospect of a good market for brimstone, she, Holland, would make no scruple of even sending her ships to Hell, and supplying the Devil with it. America then takes a hand, and denounces Britain as a bloodthirsty bully, to which Britain replies as quickly as her choking rage will permit by denouncing America as a wicked—Whig-Presbyterian—serpent. To this America rejoins with the statement that she will not surrender her liberty and property but with her life, and some additional statements which cause Britain to exclaim: "You impudent b—h! Am not I your Mother Country? Is that not a sufficient Title to your Respect and Obedience?" At this point Saxony, for the first time breaks in:

"*Mother Country!* Hah, hah, he! What Respect have *you* the front to claim as a Mother Country? You know that *I* am *your* Mother Country, and yet you pay me none. Nay, it is but the other day, that you hired Ruffians to rob me on the Highway, and burn my House. For shame! Hide your Face and hold your Tongue. If you continue this Conduct, you will make yourself the Contempt of Europe!"

This is too much for even the assurance of the dauntless termagant who, before the American war was over, was to be engaged in conflict at one time with every one of the other parties to the dialogue except Saxony.

"O Lord," she exclaims in despair, "where are my friends?" The question does not remain long unanswered.

"*France, Spain, Holland, and Saxony, all together.* Friends! Believe us, you have none, nor ever will have any, 'till you mend your Manners. How can we, who are your Neighbours, have any regard for you, or expect any Equity from you, should your Power increase, when we see how basely and unjustly you have us'd both *your own Mother—and your own Children?*"

With such rollicking fun, did Franklin, beguile his Gibeonite tasks.

A letter of information to those who would remove to America, an essay on the *Elective Franchises enjoyed by the Small Boroughs in England*, the three essays on Smoky Chimneys, the New Stove, and Maritime Topics, *The Retort Courteous*, in which some pithy reasons were given why Americans were slow in paying their old debts to British merchants, the *Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia*, the *Address of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage*, the *Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks*, the essay on *The Internal State of America* and the paper on *Good Whig Principles* make up the bulk of the graver pamphlets and papers written by Franklin between the beginning of his mission to France and his death. Some, if not all, of them have already come in for our attention, and most of them invite no special comment. All, like everything that he wrote, even the *marginalia* on the books that he read, have some kind of salt in them that keeps them sweet, assert itself as time will.

Other serious papers of Franklin, not inspired by political motives, belong to an earlier date, and, with the exception of those, to which we have more than barely

referred in previous chapters of this book, call for a word of comment. Two, *The Hints for Those that would be Rich* and the *Advice to a Young Tradesman* are merely echoes of *Poor Richard's Almanac* but are good examples of the teachings that make Franklin the most effective of all propagandists. "He that loses 5s. not only loses that Sum, but all the Advantage that might be made by turning it in Dealing, which, by the time that a young Man becomes old, amounts to a comfortable Bag of Money." This is a typical sentence taken from the Hints. After reading such a discourse as the *Advice to a Young Tradesman*, it is easy enough to see why it was that pecuniary truisms took on new life when vitalized by the mind of Franklin. Money he tells the young tradesman is of the prolific, generating nature. "He that kills a breeding sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds." The young novice is also told that the most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. "The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but, if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day." The paper ends with this pointed sermon:

> In short, the way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, *industry* and *frugality;* that is, waste neither *time* nor *money*, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality nothing will do, and with them everything. He that gets all he can honestly, and saves all he gets (necessary expenses excepted) will certainly become *rich*, if that Being who governs the world, to whom all should look for a blessing on their honest endeavours, doth not, in his wise providence, otherwise determine.

Scattered through the works of Franklin are various miscellaneous productions of no slight literary value. The *Parable against Persecution* was an ancient conception, old, we are told by Jeremy Taylor in his *Liberty of Prophesying*, as the Jews' Books. Franklin never claimed more credit for it, as he stated in a letter to Vaughan, "than what related to the style, and the addition of the concluding threatening and promise." These qualifications, however, leave him quite a different measure of credit from that of an artist who merely touches up a portrait by another hand, as a perusal of the parable will satisfy any reader. The incident, upon which the story turns, is the reception by Abraham into his tent of a stranger who fails to bless God at meat. Abraham expels him from the tent with blows for not worshipping the most high God, Creator of Heaven and Earth; only to be rebuked by the Almighty in these impressive words: "Have I borne with him these hundred and ninety and eight years, and nourished him, and cloathed him, notwithstanding his rebellion against me; and couldst not thou, who art thyself a sinner, bear with him one night?"

Only less felicitous was Franklin's *Parable on Brotherly Love*. Simeon, Levi and Judah are successively denied by their brother Reuben the use of an axe which he had bought of the Ishmaelite merchants, and which he highly prized. Therefore, they buy axes themselves from the Ishmaelites, and, as luck will have it, while Reuben is hewing timber on the river bank, his axe slips into the water and is lost. Reuben then applies to each of his three brothers in turn for the use of their axes. Simeon reminds him of his selfishness, and flatly refuses. Levi reproaches him, but adds that he will be better than he, and will lend his axe to him. Reuben, however, is too ashamed to accept it. Judah, seeing the grief and shame in his countenance, anticipates the request and exclaims, "My brother, I know thy loss; but why should it trouble thee?

Lo, have I not an axe that will serve both thee and me!" And then the lovely parable continues in these words:

> And Reuben fell on his neck, and kissed him, with tears, saying, "Thy kindness is great, but thy goodness in forgiving me is greater. Thou art indeed my brother, and whilst I live, will I surely love thee."
>
> And Judah said, "Let us also love our other brethren: behold, are we not all of one blood?" And Joseph saw these things, and reported them to his father Jacob.
>
> And Jacob said, "Reuben did wrong, but he repented. Simeon also did wrong; and Levi was not altogether blameless. But the heart of Judah is princely. Judah hath the soul of a king. His father's children shall bow down before him, and he shall rule over his brethren."

The papers contributed by Franklin to the *Busy-Body* and the *Pennsylvania Gazette* clearly indicate the influence of Addison and Steele. The Ridentius and Eugenius of the second issue, Ridentius, the wight, who gave himself an hour's diversion on the cock of a man's hat, the heels of his shoes or on one of his unguarded expressions or personal defects, Eugenius who preferred to make himself a public jest rather than be at the pains of seeing his friend in confusion, pale phantoms though they be, are palpably imitations of the Spectator and Tatler. So are the Cato of the third issue of the *Busy-Body*, whose countenance revealed habits of virtue that made one forget his homespun linen and seven days' beard, and the Cretico of the same issue, the "sowre Philosopher" who commanded nothing better from his dependents than the submissive deportment, which was like the worship paid by the Indians to the Devil.

Unlike these characters, the Patience of the fourth issue of the *Busy-Body* is a real creature of flesh and blood. She writes to the Busy-Body for advice, informing him that she is a single woman, and keeps a shop in the town for her

livelihood, and has a certain neighbor, who is really agreeable company enough, and has for some time been an intimate of hers, but who, of late, has tried her out of all patience by her frequent and long visits. She cannot do a thing in the world but this friend must know all about it, and her friend has besides two children just big enough to run about and do petty mischief, who accompany their mother on her visits and put things in the shop out of sorts; so that the writer has all the trouble and pesterment of children without the pleasure—of calling them her own.

Pray, Sir [concludes the unhappy Patience], tell me what I shall do; and talk a little against such unreasonable Visiting in your next Paper; tho' I would not have her affronted with me for a great Deal, for sincerely I love her and her Children, as well, I think, as a Neighbour can, and she buys a great many Things in a Year at my Shop. But I would beg her to consider that she uses me unmercifully, Tho' I believe it is only for want of Thought. But I have twenty Things more to tell you besides all this: There is a handsome Gentleman, that has a Mind (I don't question) to make love to me, but he can't get the least Opportunity to—O dear! here she comes again; I must conclude, yours, &c.

This letter is made the subject of some sensible comments by the *Busy-Body* on the importance of remembering the words of the Wise Man, "Withdraw thy Foot from the House of thy Neighbour, lest he grow weary of thee, and so hate thee." Later the same caution was to be conveyed in Poor Richard's, "Fish and Visitors smell after three days." The paper ends with the approval by the *Busy-Body* of the Turkish practice of admonishing guests that it is time for them to go, without actually asking them to do so, by having a chafing dish with the grateful incense of smoking aloes rising from it brought into the room and applied to their beards.

Even more lifelike than Patience are Anthony Afterwit, Celia Single, Mr. and Mrs. Careless and Alice Addertongue, the figures brought to our eye by the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Indeed, Addison himself would have had no occasion to be ashamed of them, if they had been figments of his own fancy. In his letter to the editor of the *Gazette*, Anthony Afterwit told him that about the time that he first addressed his spouse her father let it be known that, if she married a man of his liking, he would give two hundred pounds with her on the day of marriage, and that he had made some fine plans, and had even, in some measure, neglected his business on the strength of this assurance, but that, when the old gentleman saw that the writer was pretty well engaged, he, without assigning any reason, grew very angry, forbade him the house and told his daughter that, if she married him, he would not give her a farthing. However (as the father foresaw), he stole a wedding, and took his wife to his house, where they were not in quite so poor a condition as the couple described in the Scotch song who had

> "Neither Pot nor Pan,
> But four bare Legs together,"

for he had a house tolerably furnished for an ordinary man. His wife, however, was strongly inclined to be a gentlewoman. His old-fashioned looking-glass was one day broke, "*No Mortal could tell which way*," she said, and was succeeded by a large fashionable one. This in turn led to another table more suitable to such a glass, and the new table to some very handsome chairs. Thus, by degrees, he found all his old furniture stored up in the garret and everything below altered for the better.

Then, on one pretext or another, came along a tea-table with all its appurtenances of china and silver, a maid, a clock, and a pacing mare, for which he paid twenty pounds. The result was that, receiving a very severe

dun, which mentioned the next court, he began in earnest to project relief. His dear having gone over the river the preceding Monday to see a relation, and stay a fortnight, because she could not bear the heat of the town, he took his turn at alterations. He dismissed the maid, bag and baggage; he sold the pacing mare, and bought a good milch cow with three pounds of the money; he disposed of the tea-table, and put a spinning wheel in its place; he stuffed nine empty tea canisters with flax, and with some of the money, derived from the sale of the tea-furniture, he bought a set of knitting needles; "for to tell you a truth, which I would have go no farther," added honest Anthony, "*I begin to want stockings.*" The stately clock he transformed into an hour glass, by which he had gained a good round sum, and one of the pieces of the old looking-glass, squared and framed, supplied the place of the old one. In short, the face of things was quite changed, and he had paid his debts and found money in his pocket. His good dame was expected home next Friday, and, if she could conform with his new scheme of living, they would be the happiest couple, perhaps, in the Province, and, by the blessings of God, might soon be in thriving circumstances. He had reserved the great glass for her, and he would allow her, when she came in, to be taken suddenly ill with the *headache*, the *stomachache*, the fainting fits, or whatever other disorder she might think more proper, and she might retire to bed as soon as she pleased, but, if he did not find her in perfect health, both of body and mind, the next morning, away would go the aforesaid great glass, with several other trinkets, to the *vendue* that very day.

That the wife of Anthony did succumb to the situation, we know, for it was an unfortunate reference to her that caused Celia Single to write her letter to the editor of the *Gazette*. During the morning of the preceding Wednesday, she said, she happened to be in at Mrs. Careless',

when the husband of that lady returned from market, and showed his wife some balls of thread which he had bought. "My Dear," says he, "I like mightily these Stockings, which I yesterday saw Neighbour Afterwit knitting for her Husband, of Thread of her own Spinning. I should be glad to have some such stockins myself: I understand that your Maid Mary is a very good Knitter, and seeing this Thread in Market, I have bought it, that the Girl may make a Pair or two for me." Then, according to Celia, there took place in her presence a dialogue between husband and wife so animated that, knowing as she did that a man and his wife are apt to quarrel more violently, when before strangers, than when by themselves, she got up and went out hastily. She was glad, however, to understand from Mary, who came to her of an errand in the evening, that the couple dined together pretty peaceably (the balls of thread, that had caused the difference, being thrown into the kitchen fire).

The story, beginning with the reply of Mrs. Careless to the offensive suggestion of Mr. Careless, is too good not to be reproduced in full.

Mrs. Careless was just then at the Glass, dressing her Head, and turning about with the Pins in her Mouth, "Lord, Child," says she, "are you crazy? What Time has Mary to knit? Who must do the Work, I wonder, if you set her to Knitting?" "Perhaps, my Dear," says he, "you have a mind to knit 'em yourself; I remember, when I courted you, I once heard you say, that you had learn'd to knit of your Mother." "I knit Stockins for you!" says she; "not I truly! There are poor Women enough in Town, that can knit; if you please, you may employ them." "Well, but my Dear," says he, "you know *a penny sav'd is a penny got*, A pin a day is a groat a year, every little makes a muckle, and there is neither Sin nor Shame in Knitting a pair of Stockins; why should you express such a mighty Aversion to it? As to *poor* Women, you know we are not People of Quality, we have no Income to maintain us but

what arises from my Labour and Industry: Methinks you should not be at all displeas'd, if you have an Opportunity to get something as well as myself."

"I wonder," says she, "how you can propose such a thing to me; did not you always tell me you would maintain me like a Gentlewoman? If I had married Captain ——, he would have scorn'd even to mention Knitting of Stockins." "Prithee," says he, (a little nettled,) "what do you tell me of your Captains? If you could have had him, I suppose you would, or perhaps you did not very well like him. If I did promise to maintain you like a Gentlewoman, I suppose 'tis time enough for that, when you know how to behave like one; Meanwhile 'tis your Duty to help make me able. How long, d'ye think, I can maintain you at your present Rate of Living?" "Pray," says she, (somewhat fiercely, and dashing the Puff into the Powder-box,) don't use me after this Manner, for I assure you I won't bear it. This is the Fruit of your poison Newspapers; there shall come no more here, I promise you." "Bless us," says he, "what an unaccountable thing is this? Must a Tradesman's Daughter, and the Wife of a Tradesman, necessarily and instantly be a Gentlewoman? You had no Portion; I am forc'd to work for a Living; you are too great to do the like; there's the Door, go and live upon your Estate, if you can find it; in short, I don't desire to be troubled w'ye."

And then it was that Celia Single gathered up her skirts and left.

The letter from Alice Addertongue to the editor of the *Gazette* is exactly in the manner of the *School for Scandal*, written many years later. She is a young girl of about thirty-five, she says, and lives at present with her mother. Like the Emperor, who, if a day passed over his head, during which he had conferred no benefit on any man, was in the habit of saying, *Diem perdidi, I have lost a Day*, she would make use of the same expression, were it possible for a day to pass over her head, during which she

had failed to scandalize someone; a misfortune, thanks be praised, that had not befallen her these dozen years.

My mother, good Woman, and I [the forked tongue plays precisely as it might have done in the mouth of Lady Sneerwell] have heretofore differ'd upon this Account. She argu'd, that Scandal spoilt all good Conversation; and I insisted, that without it there would be no such Thing. Our Disputes once rose so high, that we parted Tea-Tables, and I concluded to entertain my Acquaintance in the Kitchin. The first Day of this Separation we both drank Tea at the same Time, but she with her Visitors in the Parlor. She would not hear of the least Objection to anyone's Character, but began a new sort of Discourse in some queer philosophical Manner as this; "I am mightily pleas'd sometimes," says she, "when I observe and consider, that the World is not so bad as People out of humour imagine it to be. There is something amiable, some good Quality or other, in everybody. If we were only to speak of People that are least respected, there is such a one is very dutiful to her Father, and methinks has a fine Set of Teeth; such a one is very respectful to her Husband; such a one is very kind to her poor Neighbours, and besides has a very handsome Shape; such a one is always ready to serve a Friend, and in my opinion there is not a Woman in Town that has a more agreable Air and Gait." This fine kind of Talk, which lasted near half an Hour, she concluded by saying, "I do not doubt but everyone of you have made the like Observations, and I should be glad to have the Conversation continu'd upon this Subject." Just at that Juncture I peep'd in at the Door, and never in my Life before saw such a Set of simple vacant Countenances. They looked somehow neither glad, nor sorry, nor angry, nor pleas'd, nor indifferent, nor attentive; but (excuse the Simile) like so many blue wooden images of Rie Doe. I in the Kitchin had already begun a ridiculous Story of Mr.——'s Intrigue with his Maid, and his Wife's Behaviour upon the Discovery; at some Passages we laugh'd heartily, and one of the gravest of Mama's Company, without making any Answer to her Discourse, got up *to go and see what the Girls were so merry about:* She was follow'd by a Second,

and shortly by a Third, till at last the old Gentlewoman found herself quite alone, and, being convinc'd that her Project was impracticable, came herself and finish'd her Tea with us; ever since which *Saul also has been among the Prophets*, and our Disputes lie dormant.

It was in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, too, that Franklin published his "Dialogue between Philocles and Horatio," in which Philocles twice meets Horatio in the fields, and, in accents full of persuasive blandishment, diverts his feet from the pursuit of sensual pleasure into paths of contentment and peace. In the first dialogue, the moralist takes as his thesis the proposition that self-denial is not only the most reasonable but the most pleasant thing in the world. In the second, he holds up to Horatio the constant and durable happiness, so unlike the chequered, fleeting pleasures of Sense, which springs from acts of humanity, friendship, generosity and benevolence. One maxim in the last dialogue is worth many of the sayings of Poor Richard: "The Foundation of all Virtue and Happiness is Thinking rightly."

Other papers from the hand of Franklin that appeared in the *Gazette* were *A Witch Trial at Mount Holly*, *An Apology for Printers*, *A Meditation on a Quart Mugg*, *Shavers and Trimmers*, and *Exporting of Felons to the Colonies*.

In the "Witch Trial at Mount Holly," Franklin describes in a highly humorous manner the results of the ordeals to which a man and a woman, accused by a man and a woman of witchcraft, were subjected. One of these ordeals consisted in weighing the accused in scales against a Bible for the purpose of seeing whether it would prove too heavy for them.

Then [the facetious narrative relates] came out of the House a grave, tall Man carrying the Holy Writ before the supposed Wizard etc, (as solemely as the Sword-Bearer of London before

the Lord Mayor) the Wizard was first put in the Scale, and over him was read a Chapter out of the Books of Moses, and then the Bible was put in the other Scale, (which, being kept down before) was immediately let go; but, to the great surprize of the Spectators, Flesh and Bones came down plump, and outweighed that great good Book by abundance. After the same Manner the others were served, and their Lumps of Mortality severally were too heavy for Moses and all the Prophets and Apostles.

This ordeal was followed by the Trial by Water. Both accused and accusers were stripped, except that the women were not deprived of their shifts, bound hand and foot and let down into the water by ropes from the side of a barge. The rest is thus told:

The accused man being thin and spare with some Difficulty began to sink at last; but the rest, every one of them, swam very light upon the Water. A Sailor in the Flat jump'd out upon the Back of the Man accused thinking to drive him down to the Bottom; but the Person bound, without any Help, came up some time before the other. The Woman Accuser being told that she did not sink, would be duck'd a second Time; when she swam again as light as before. Upon which she declared, That she believed the Accused had bewitched her to make her so light, and that she would be duck'd again a Hundred Times but she would duck the Devil out of her. The Accused Man, being surpriz'd at his own swimming, was not so confident of his Innocence as before, but said, "If I am a Witch, it is more than I know." The more thinking Part of the Spectators were of Opinion that any Person so bound and placed in the Water (unless they were mere Skin and Bones) would swim, till their breath was gone, and their Lungs fill'd with Water. But it being the general Belief of the Populace that the Women's Shifts and the Garters with which they were bound help'd to support them, it is said they are to be tried again the next Warm Weather, naked.

In the "Apology for Printers," Franklin defends his guild with much point and good sense, in terms modern enough

to be fully applicable to newspapers at the present time. It was inspired by the resentment which his advertisement relating to Sea Hens and Black Gowns excited, and, though written in a half-humorous style, states the difficulties of an editor, between his duty to publish everything, and the certainty of private resentment, if he does, with about as much felicity of presentation as they are ever likely to be stated. Among the various solid reasons, set forth in formal numerical sequence, that he gave, by way of mitigation, for publishing the advertisement, he mentioned these, too:

"6. That I got Five Shillings by it.

"7. That none who are angry with me would have given me so much to let it alone."

In answer to the accusation that printers sometimes printed vicious or silly things not worth reading, he charged the fact up to the vicious taste of the public itself. He had known, he said, a very numerous impression of Robin Hood's songs to go off in the Province at 2 s. per book in less than a twelvemonth, when a small quantity of David's Psalms (an excellent version) had lain upon his hands about twice that long.

In the "Meditation on a Quart Mugg" Franklin begins with the exclamation, "WRETCHED, miserable, and unhappy Mug!" and traces with mock sympathy all the misfortunes of its ignoble and squalid career from the time that it is first forced into the company of boisterous sots, who lay all their nonsense, noise, profane swearing, cursing and quarrelling on it, though it speaks not a word, until the inevitable hour when it is broken into pieces, and finds its way for the most part back to Mother Earth. The paper is only a trifle, but a trifle fashioned with no little skill to hit the fancy of an age that, as Franklin's "Drunkard's Vocabulary" (also published in the *Gazette*) shows, had innumerable cant terms for the condition for which the mug was held to such an unjust responsibility.

The paper on "Shavers and Trimmers" is not so happy and well sustained, but its classifications of the different species of persons, answering these descriptions, is not without humor. One sentence in it, when Franklin speaks of the species of Shavers and Trimmers, who "cover (what is called by an eminent Preacher) *their poor Dust* in tinsel Cloaths and gaudy Plumes of Feathers," reads like a paragraph in the *Courant*. "A competent Share of religious Horror thrown into the Countenance," he says, "with proper Distortions of the Face, and the Addition of a lank Head of Hair, or a long Wig and Band, commands a most profound Respect to Insolence and Ignorance."

The paper on the "Exporting of Felons to the Colonies" is marked by the grim, biting irony of Swift, but was no severer than the practice of setting British criminals at large in America deserved. Such tender parental concern, Franklin said, called aloud for due returns of gratitude and duty, and he suggested that these returns should assume the form of rattlesnakes, "Felons-convict from the Beginning of the World." In the spring of the year, when they first crept out of their holes, they were feeble, heavy, slow and easily taken, and, if a small bounty was allowed per head, some thousands might be collected annually, and transported to Britain. There he proposed that they should be carefully distributed in St. James' Park, in the Spring Gardens, and other pleasure resorts about London, and in the gardens of all the nobility and gentry throughout the nation, but particularly in the gardens of the Prime Ministers, the Lords of Trade and Members of Parliament; for to them they were most particularly obliged. Such a paper, it is needless to say, was better calculated for its purpose than a thousand appeals of the ordinary type would have been.

The speech of Polly Baker is one of the most famous of Franklin's *jeux d'esprit*. The introduction to it states

that it was delivered when she was prosecuted for the fifth time for having a bastard child, and with such effect that the court decided not to punish her; indeed with such effect that one of her judges even married her the next day, and in time had fifteen children by her. The perfectly ingenuous manner in which the traverser refuses to admit that she has committed any offence whatever and insists that, in default of honorable suitors, she has but dutifully, though irregularly, complied with the first and great command of nature and nature's God—increase and multiply—is undoubtedly, coarse as it is, a stroke of art, but the performance is too gross for modern scruples.

More decorous reading is the fictitious discourse by a Spanish Jesuit on the "Meanes of disposing the Enemie to Peace," which Franklin, during his first mission to England, contributed to the *London Chronicle* for the purpose of rousing the English people to a sense of the artifices, that were being employed by the French to build up a party in England for peace at any price. In the introduction to the discourse, it is stated that it was taken from a book containing a number of discourses, addressed by the Jesuit to the King of Spain in 1629, and that nothing was needed to render it *apropos* to the existing situation of England except the substitution of France for Spain. The discourse points out in detail, with shrewd insight into all the selfish and timid impulses, by which a society is corrupted or enervated, when cunningly practised upon, the different classes in the country of the enemy that could be manipulated in one way or another until no sound but that of Peace, Peace, Peace would be heard from any quarter.

The Craven Street Gazette, written in mock court language, and replete with the subtle suggestions of household intimacy, is one of the most exquisite triumphs of Franklin's wit and fancy.

This morning [it begins], Queen Margaret, accompanied by her first maid of honour, Miss Franklin, (Sally Franklin) set

out for Rochester. Immediately on their departure, the whole street was in tears—from a heavy shower of rain. It is whispered, that the new family administration which took place on her Majesty's departure, promises, like all other new administrations, to govern much better than the old one.

We hear, that the great person (so called from his enormous size), of a certain family in a certain street, is grievously affected at the late changes, and could hardly be comforted this morning, though the new ministry promised him a roasted shoulder of mutton and potatoes for his dinner.

It is said, that the same great person intended to pay his respects to another great personage this day, at St. James's, it being coronation-day; hoping thereby a little to amuse his grief; but was prevented by an accident, Queen Margaret, or her maid of honour having carried off the key of the drawers, so that the lady of the bed-chamber could not come at a laced shirt for his Highness. Great clamours were made on this occasion against her Majesty.

And so the *Gazette* goes on, gay and graceful as the play of sunshine on the surface of a dimpled sea, from incident to incident that took place during the absence of Queen Margaret (Mrs. Stevenson) and Miss Franklin, investing each with a ceremonious dignity and importance that never descend to buffoonery.

These are some of the occurrences chronicled as taking place on the first Sunday after the departure of the Queen. Walking up and down in his room we might observe was one of Franklin's ways of taking exercise.

Lord and Lady Hewson walked after dinner to Kensington, to pay their duty to the Dowager, and Dr. Fatsides made four hundred and sixty-nine turns in his dining-room, as the exact distance of a visit to the lovely Lady Barwell, whom he did not find at home; so there was no struggle for and against a kiss, and he sat down to dream in the easy-chair that he had it without any trouble.

And these are some of the observations made under the date of the succeeding Tuesday.

It is remark'd, that the Skies have wept every Day in Craven Street, the Absence of the Queen.

The Publick may be assured that this Morning a certain *great* Personage was asked very complaisantly by the Mistress of the Household, if he would chuse to have the Blade-Bone of Saturday's Mutton that had been kept for his Dinner today *broil'd* or *cold*. *He answer'd gravely, If there is any Flesh on it, it may be broil'd; if not, it may as well be cold.* Orders were accordingly given for Broiling it. But when it came to Table, there was indeed so very little Flesh, or rather none, (Puss having din'd on it yesterday after Nanny)[1] that if our new Administration had been as good Oeconomists as they would be thought, the Expence of Broiling might well have been saved to the Publick, and carried to the Sinking Fund. It is assured the *great* Person bears all with infinite Patience. But the Nation is astonish'd at the insolent Presumption, that dares treat so much Mildness in so cruel a manner!

Under the same date is made the announcement that at six o'clock, that afternoon, news had come by the post that her Majesty arrived safely at Rochester on Saturday night. "The Bells," the *Gazette* adds, "immediately rang—for Candles to illuminate the Parlour, the Court went into Cribbidge, and the Evening concluded with every other Demonstration of Joy." This is followed by a letter to the *Gazette* from a person signing himself "Indignation," who says that he makes no doubt of the truth of the statement that a certain great person is half-starved on the blade-bone of a sheep by a set of the most careless, worthless, thoughtless, inconsiderate, corrupt, ignorant, blundering, foolish, crafty & knavish ministers

[1] There is the following reference to Nanny in a letter from Franklin to Deborah, dated June 10, 1770, "Poor Nanny was drawn in to marry a worthless Fellow, who got all her Money, and then ran away and left her. So she is return'd to her old Service with Mrs. Stevenson, poorer than ever, but seems pretty patient, only looks dejected."

that ever got into a house and pretended to govern a family and provide a dinner. "Alas for the poor old England of Craven Street!" this correspondent exclaims, "If they continue in Power another Week, the Nation will be ruined. Undone, totally undone, if I and my Friends are not appointed to succeed them."

This letter is accompanied by another signed, "A Hater of Scandal," which takes "Indignation" to task, and declares that the writer believes that, even if the Angel Gabriel would condescend to be their minister, and provide their dinners, he would scarcely escape newspaper defamation from a gang of hungry, ever-restless, discontented and malicious scribblers. It was a piece of justice, he declared, that the publisher of the *Gazette* owed to their righteous administration to undeceive the public on this occasion by assuring them of the fact, which is that there was provided and actually smoking on the table under his royal nose at the same instant as the blade-bone as fine a piece of ribs of beef roasted as ever knife was put into, with potatoes, horse-radish, pickled walnuts &c. which his Highness might have eaten, if so he had pleased to do.

Along with the political intelligence and the letters the *Gazette* also contains these notices and stock quotations:

MARRIAGES, none since our last—but Puss begins to go a Courting.

DEATHS, In the back Closet and elsewhere, many poor Mice:

STOCKS Biscuit—very low. Buckwheat & Indian Meal—both sour. Tea, lowering daily—in the Canister. Wine, shut.

The *Petition of the Letter Z* was a humorous offshoot of Franklin's Reformed Alphabet. In a formal complaint after the manner of a bill in chancery, to the worshipful Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Censor-General, Z complains that his claims to respect are as good as those of the other

letters of the Alphabet, but that he had not only been placed at its tail, when he had as much right as any of his companions to be at its head, but by the injustice of his enemies had been totally excluded from the word WISE and his place filled by a little hissing, crooked, serpentine, venomous letter, called S, though it must be evident to his worship and to all the world that W, I, S, E does not spell *Wize* but *Wise*. The petition ends with the prayer that, in consideration of his long-suffering and patience, the petitioner may be placed at the head of the Alphabet, and that S may be turned out of the word *wise*, and the Petitioner employed instead of him.

Z did not make out his case, for at the foot of the petition is appended this order: "Mr. Bickerstaff, having examined the allegations of the above petition, judges and determines, that Z be admonished to be content with his station, forbear reflections upon his brother letters, and remember his own small usefulness, and the little occasion there is for him in the Republic of Letters, since S whom he so despises can so well serve instead of him."

Some of the liveliest of the lighter papers of Franklin were written during the course of his French Mission. His inimitable *Journey to the Elysian Fields* and *Conte* have already received our attention in an earlier chapter. Among the others was *The Sale of the Hessians*, *The Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle*, *The Ephemera*, *The Whistle*, his letter to the Abbé de la Roche, communicating to him the *petite chanson à boire* that he had written forty years before, his letter to the Abbé Morellet on wine, the *Dialogue between him and the Gout*, *The Handsome and Deformed Leg* and *The Economical Project*. If there was nothing else to support the claim of Franklin to the authorship of *The Sale of the Hessians*, the difficulty of abridging it would be one proof. Its humor is as trenchant as that of Frederick the Great in levying the same toll upon these hirelings, when passing through

his dominions on their way to America, pursuant to the mercenary engagements between their German masters and George III., as that levied by him upon other cattle. The paper is thrown into the form of a letter from the Count De Schaumbergh to the Baron Hohendorf, commanding the Hessian troops in America. It begins as follows:

Monsieur de Baron:—On my return from Naples, I received at Rome your letter of the 27th December of last year. I have learned with unspeakable pleasure the courage our troops exhibited at Trenton, and you cannot imagine my joy on being told that of the 1,950 Hessians engaged in the fight, but 345 escaped. There were just 1,605 men killed, and I can not sufficiently commend your prudence in sending an exact list of the dead to my minister in London. This precaution was the more necessary, as the report sent to the English Ministry does not give but 1,455 dead. This would make 483,450 florins instead of 643,500 which I am entitled to demand under our convention. You will comprehend the prejudice which such an error would work in my finances, and I do not doubt you will take the necessary pains to prove that Lord North's list is false and yours correct.

This is another paragraph:

I am about to send to you some new recruits. Don't economize them. Remember glory before all things. Glory is true wealth. There is nothing degrades the soldier like the love of money. He must care only for honour and reputation, but this reputation must be acquired in the midst of dangers. A battle gained without costing the conqueror any blood is an inglorious success, while the conquered cover themselves with glory by perishing with their arms in their hands. Do you remember that of the 300 Lacedaemonians who defended the defile of Thermopylae, not one returned? How happy should I be could I say the same of my brave Hessians!

It is true that their King, Leonidas, perished with them: but things have changed, and it is no longer the custom for princes

of the empire to go and fight in America for a cause with which they have no concern.

The Baron is further commended for sending back to Europe that Dr. Crumerus who was so successful in curing dysentery, and is told that it is better that the Hessians should burst in their barracks than fly in a battle, and tarnish the glory of the Count's arms.

Besides [the Count continues], you know that they pay me as killed for all who die from disease, and I don't get a farthing for runaways. My trip to Italy, which has cost me enormously, makes it desirable that there should be a great mortality among them. You will therefore promise promotion to all who expose themselves; you will exhort them to seek glory in the midst of dangers; you will say to Major Maundorff that I am not at all content with his saving the 345 men who escaped the massacre of Trenton. Through the whole campaign he has not had ten men killed in consequence of his orders. Finally, let it be your principal object to prolong the war and avoid a decisive engagement on either side, for I have made arrangements for a grand Italian opera, and I do not wish to be obliged to give it up. Meantime I pray God, my dear Baron de Hohendorf, to have you in his holy and gracious keeping.

The *Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle* is distinguished by the same sort of cool, dry mocking verisimilitude. Captain Gerrish, of the New England Militia, is supposed to write a letter in which he says that the members of a recent expedition against the Indians were struck with horror to find among the packages of peltry captured by them eight large ones containing scalps of their unhappy country-folks taken in the last three years by the Seneca Indians from the heads of inhabitants of the frontiers of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and sent by them as a present to Colonel Haldimand, the Governor of Canada; to be forwarded by him to England. The scalps, Captain Ger-

rish asserts, were accompanied by a curious letter to the Governor from one, James Craufurd. Then is set forth this letter which describes with the minuteness of a mercantile invoice the contents of each of the eight packages of scalps, some of Congress soldiers, some of farmers surprised in their houses at night, some of farmers killed in their houses by day, some of farmers killed in the fields, some of women, some of boys, some of girls and some of little infants ripped from the womb. The contents of several of the packages are described as mixed lots. The letter also fully explains the Indian triumphal marks painted upon the different scalps, which were all cured, dried and stretched like the pelts of the otter or beaver on hoops. The black circle denoted that the victim had perished at night, the little red foot that he had died in defence of his life and family, the little yellow flame that he had been tortured at the stake. The hair braided in the Indian fashion meant that the victim was a mother, other tokens that the victim was a boy or a girl. A band fixed to the hoop of one of the scalps signified that the head to which it had been attached was that of a rebel clergyman. Many gruesome tokens are explained in the same systematic and businesslike manner. Along with several other passages from a speech of Conejogatchie in Council, the letter also communicates one in which the speaker declares that his people wished the scalps to be sent across the water to the great King that he might regard them and be refreshed. In concluding his own letter, Captain Gerrish states that Lieutenant Fitzgerald would have undertaken to convey the scalps to England and to hang them all up some dark night on the trees in St. James' Park, where they could be seen from the King and Queen's Palaces in the morning. But this proposal, the *Chronicle* says, was not approved in Boston. It was proposed instead to make the scalps up in decent little packets, and to seal and direct them; one to the King containing a sample

of every kind for his museum, one to the Queen, with some of women and children; the rest to be distributed among both Houses of Parliament, and a double quantity to be given to the Bishops. The relations of the *Chronicle* to this production were, of course, as purely fictitious as every other part of it. Associated with the performance, as another publication in the *Chronicle*, is a fictitious letter, too, from Paul Jones to Sir Joseph Yorke, the English Ambassador to Holland, in which he defends himself with considerable spirit from the charge of being a pirate, and reminds Sir Joseph of the freebooting principles upon which England was waging war against America. When he read this letter, Horace Walpole wrote to the Countess of Ossory, "Have you seen in the papers an excellent letter of Paul Jones to Sir Joseph Yorke? Elle nous dit bien des vérités! I doubt poor Sir Joseph cannot answer them! Dr. Franklin himself, I should think, was the author. It is certainly written by a first-rate pen, and not by a common man of war."

The Ephemera was addressed to Madame Brillon, and is one of the most justly famous of all Franklin's writings. In a letter to William Carmichael, he states that the thought was partly taken from a little piece of some unknown writer, which he had met with fifty years before in a newspaper. Another proof, we might say in passing, how little disposed Franklin was to borrow from Richard Jackson, or any one else without due acknowledgment.

So dependent is every part of this paper for its effect upon the whole that to quote only a portion of it would be as futile as an effort to divide a bubble without destroying it. These are the precise words in full of this bewitching little production:

You may remember, my dear friend, that when we lately spent that happy day in the delightful garden and sweet society of the Moulin Joly, I stopt a little in one of our walks,

and staid some time behind the company. We had been shown numberless skeletons of a kind of little fly, called an ephemera, whose successive generations, we were told, were bred and expired within the day. I happened to see a living company of them on a leaf, who appeared to be engaged in conversation. You know I understand all the inferior animal tongues; my too great application to the study of them is the best excuse I can give for the little progress I have made in your charming language. I listened through curiosity to the discourse of these little creatures; but as they, in their national vivacity, spoke three or four together, I could make but little of their conversation. I found, however, by some broken expressions that I heard now and then, they were disputing warmly on the merit of two foreign musicians, one a *cousin*, the other a *moscheto;* in which dispute they spent their time, seemingly as regardless of the shortness of life as if they had been sure of living a month. Happy people! thought I, you are certainly under a wise, just, and mild government, since you have no public grievances to complain of, nor any subject of contention but the perfections and imperfections of foreign music. I turned my head from them to an old grey-headed one, who was single on another leaf, and talking to himself. Being amused with his soliloquy, I put it down in writing, in hopes it will likewise amuse her to whom I am so much indebted for the most pleasing of all amusements, her delicious company and heavenly harmony.

It was [said he] the opinion of learned philosophers of our race, who lived and flourished long before my time, that this vast world, the Moulin Joly, could not itself subsist more than eighteen hours; and I think there was some foundation for that opinion, since, by the apparent motion of the great luminary that gives life to all nature, and which in my time has evidently declined considerably towards the ocean at the end of our earth, it must then finish its course, be extinguished in the waters that surround us, and leave the world in cold and darkness, necessarily producing universal death and destruction. I have lived seven of those hours, a great age, being no less than four hundred and twenty minutes of time. How very few of us continue so long! I have seen generations born,

flourish, and expire. My present friends are the children and grandchildren of the friends of my youth, who *are now*, alas, no more! And I must soon follow them; for, by the course of nature, though still in health, I cannot expect to live above seven or eight minutes longer. What now avails all my toil and labor, in amassing honey-dew on this leaf, which I cannot live to enjoy! What the political struggles I have been engaged in, for the good of my compatriot inhabitants of this bush, or my philosophical studies for the benefit of our race in general! for, in politics, what can laws do without morals? Our present race of ephemeræ will in a course of minutes become corrupt, like those of other and older bushes, and consequently as wretched. And in philosophy how small our progress! Alas! art is long, and life is short! My friends would comfort me with the idea of a name, they say, I shall leave behind me; and they tell me I have lived long enough to nature and to glory. But what will fame be to an ephemera who no longer exists? And what will become of all history in the eighteenth hour, when the world itself, even the whole Moulin Joly, shall come to its end, and be buried in universal ruin?

To me, after all my eager pursuits, no solid pleasures now remain, but the reflection of a long life spent in meaning well, the sensible conversation of a few good lady ephemeræ, and now and then a kind smile and a tune from the ever amiable *Brillante*.

The Whistle, too, was addressed to Madame Brillon and is also one of the most celebrated of Franklin's bagatelles, but is scarcely equal, we think, to the best of them.

In his opinion, Franklin said, they might all draw more good from the world than they did if they would take care not to give too much for whistles. With this foreword, he tells his story. When a child of seven years of age, his friends on a holiday filled his pocket with coppers, and, being charmed with the sound of a whistle that he met by the way in the hands of another boy, he voluntarily offered,

and gave all his money for one. He then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with his whistle, but disturbing the entire family. But his brothers and sisters told him that he had given four times as much for the whistle as it was worth, put him in mind of what good things he might have bought with the rest of the money and laughed at him so much for his folly that he cried with vexation. The lesson, however, was of use to him, so that often, when he was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, he said to himself, "*Don't give too much for the whistle,*" and he saved his money. And so, when he grew up, came into the world and observed the actions of men, he thought he met with many, very many who gave too much for the whistle.

He then mentions who some of these men were, the man ambitious of court favor, the man covetous of political popularity, the miser, the slave of pleasure, the devotee of fashion, the beautiful, sweet-tempered girl, married to an ill-natured brute of a husband, and, after the mention of each, comes the running comment, "This man gives too much for his whistle," or its equivalent.

Yet [Franklin concludes], I ought to have charity for these unhappy people, when I consider, that, with all this wisdom of which I am boasting, there are certain things in the world so tempting, for example, the apples of King John, which happily are not to be bought; for if they were put to sale by auction, I might very easily be led to ruin myself in the purchase, and find that I had once more given too much for the *whistle.*

The reader has already had occasion to know what kind of fruit these apples of King John were, and in whose orchard they grew.

To realize what an indifferent poet Franklin was, and yet at the same time what a master of prose, one has but to first read his *petite chanson à boire* beginning,

"Fair Venus calls; her voice obey,"

and then his letter to the Abbé Morellet on wine. The letter was written to repay the Abbé for some of his excellent drinking songs.

"In vino veritas," said the sage, [is the way Franklin begins]. Before Noah, when men had nothing but water to drink, they could not find the truth, so they went astray, and became abominably wicked, and were justly exterminated by the water that they were fond of drinking. Good man Noah, seeing that this bad drink had been the death of all his contemporaries, contracted an aversion to it, and God to quench his thirst, created the vine, and revealed to him the art of making wine. With its aid, Noah discovered many and many a truth, and, since his time, the word "divine" has been in use, meaning originally to discover by means of wine. . . . Since that time, too, all excellent things, even deities themselves, have been called divine or divinities.

Men speak of the conversion of water into wine at the marriage of Cana as a miracle. But this change is worked every day by the goodness of God under our eyes. Witness the water, that falls from the skies upon our vineyards, and then passes into the roots of the vines to be converted into wine, a constant proof that God loves us, and that he is pleased to see us happy. The miracle in question was performed merely to hasten the operation on an occasion of sudden need that made it indispensable.

It is true that God has also taught men how to reduce wine to water; but what kind of water? Why *l'eau-de-vie.*

Franklin then begs his Christian brother to be kindly and beneficent like God and not to spoil his good work. When he saw his table companion pour wine into his glass he should not hasten to pour water into it. Why should he desire to drown the truth? His neighbor was likely to know better what suited him than he. Perhaps he does not like water, perhaps he wishes only a few drops of it out of complaisance to the fashion of the day, perhaps he

does not wish another to see how little he puts in his glass. Water then should be offered only to children; it was a false and annoying form of politeness to do otherwise. This the writer told the Abbé as a man of the world, and he would end as he had begun, like a good Christian, by making one very important religious observation suggested by the Holy Scriptures. While the Apostle Paul had gravely advised Timothy to put wine into his water for his health, not one of the Apostles, nor any of the Holy Fathers, had ever advised anyone to put water into wine.

The "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout" owes its value not so much to its humor as to the knowledge that it incidentally affords us of the personal habits of the former and his intimacy with Madame Helvétius and Madame Brillon. Along with the reproaches and twinges of pain which evoke repeated Ehs! and Ohs! from Franklin, as the colloquy proceeds, the Gout contrives to communicate to us no little information on these subjects in terms in which physiology, hygiene and gallantry are each made to do duty. He tells Franklin that he, the Gout, very well knows that the quantity of meat and drink proper for a man, who takes a reasonable degree of exercise, is too much for another who never takes any. If his, Franklin's, situation in life is a sedentary one, his amusements and recreations at least should be active. He ought to walk or ride, or, if the weather prevents that, play at billiards. But, instead of gaining an appetite for breakfast by salutary exercise, he amuses himself with books, pamphlets or newspapers, which commonly are not worth the reading. Yet he eats an inordinate breakfast, four dishes of tea, with cream, and one or two buttered toasts, with slices of hung beef, which the Gout fancies are not things the most easily digested. Immediately afterwards he sits down to write at his desk or converse with persons who apply to him on business. Thus the time passes till one without any kind of bodily exercise. This might be pardoned

out of regard, as Franklin said, for his sedentary condition, but what is his practice after dinner? Walking in the beautiful gardens of those friends with whom he had dined would be the choice of men of sense. His was to be fixed down to chess, where he was found engaged for two or three hours! This was his perpetual recreation, which was the least eligible of any for a sedentary man, because, instead of accelerating the motion of the fluids, the rigid attention it required helped to retard the circulation and obstruct internal secretions. Wrapped in the speculations of this wretched game, he destroyed his constitution. What could be expected from such a course of living but a body replete with stagnant humours, ready to fall a prey to all kinds of dangerous maladies, if he, the Gout, did not occasionally bring him relief by agitating those humors, and so purifying or dissipating them. If it was in some nook or alley in Paris deprived of walks that Franklin played awhile at chess after dinner, this might be excusable, but the same taste prevailed with him in Paris, at Auteuil Montmartre or Sanois, places where there were the finest, gardens and walks, a pure air, beautiful women and most agreeable and instructive conversation; all of which he might enjoy by frequenting the walks. At this point, Franklin, after some more prolonged Ehs! and Ohs!, manages to remind the Gout that it is not fair to say that he takes no exercise when he does so very often in going out to dine and returning in his carriage; but this statement the Gout brushes brusquely aside. That of all imaginable exercises, he asserts, is the most slight and insignificant, if Franklin alludes to the motion of a carriage suspended on springs. By observing the degree of heat obtained by different kinds of motion, we may form an estimate of the quantity of exercise given by each. Thus, for example, if Franklin should turn out to walk in winter with cold feet, in an hour's time he would be in a glow all over; if he should ride on horseback, the same effect would scarcely be

perceived by four hours' round trotting, but, if he should loll in a carriage, such as he had mentioned, he might travel all day, and gladly enter the last inn to warm his feet by a fire.[1] Providence has appointed few to roll in carriages, while it has given to all a pair of legs, which are machines infinitely more commodious and serviceable. He should observe, when he walked, that all his weight was alternately thrown from one leg to the other; this occasions a great pressure upon the vessels of the foot, and repels their contents. When relieved by the weight being thrown on the other foot, the vessels of the first are allowed to replenish, and, by a return of this weight, this repulsion again succeeds; thus accelerating the circulation of the blood, with the result that the cheeks are ruddy and the health established.

Behold [the Gout is then artfully made to say], your fair friend at Auteuil (Madame Helvétius); a lady who received from bounteous nature more really useful science, than half a dozen such pretenders to philosophy as you have been able to extract from all your books. When she honours you with a visit, it is on foot. She walks all hours of the day, and leaves indolence, and its concomitant maladies, to be endured by her

[1] These conclusions about physical exercise had been previously expounded by Franklin to his son in a letter, dated Aug. 19, 1772, in which he expressed his concern at hearing that William was not well. In that connection they do not seem quite so pedantic. The writer thought that, when tested by the amount of corporeal warmth produced, there was, roughly speaking, more exercise in riding one mile on horseback than five in a coach, more in walking one mile on foot than five on horseback, and more in walking one mile up and down stairs than five on a level floor. He also had a good word to say for the use of the dumb-bell as a "compendious" form of exercise; stating that by the use of dumb-bells he had in forty swings quickened his pulse from sixty to one hundred beats in a minute, counted by a second watch. Warmth, he supposed, generally increased with a rapid pulse. Upon one occasion in France, when John Adams told him that he fancied that he did not exercise so much as he was wont, he replied: "Yes, I walk a league every day in my chamber. I walk quick, and for an hour, so that I go a league; I make a point of religion of it."

horses. In this see at once the preservative of her health and personal charms.

Nor does the Gout go off before he is with equal art made to say a flattering word about the Brillons.

You know [he declares], M. Brillon's gardens, and what fine walks they contain; you know the handsome flight of an hundred steps, which lead from the terrace above to the lawn below. You have been in the practice of visiting this amiable family twice a week, after dinner, and it is a maxim of your own, that "a man may take as much exercise in walking a mile, up and down stairs, as in ten on level ground." What an opportunity was here for you to have had exercise in both these ways. Did you embrace it, and how often?

Franklin is bound to admit that he cannot immedately answer the question, and the Gout answers it for him. "Not once," he says, and then goes on to chide Franklin with the fact that, during the summer, he is in the habit of going to M. Brillon's at six o'clock and contenting himself with the view from his terrace, tea and the chess-board, though the charming lady, with her lovely children and friends, are eager to walk with him, and entertain him with their agreeable conversation.

A little more interchange of conversation and poor Franklin in despair asks, "What then would you have me do with my carriage?" and the Gout replies, "Burn it if you choose; you would at least get heat out of it once in this way." In the end, Franklin promises that, if his persecutor will only leave him, he will never more play at chess, but will take exercise daily, and live temperately—a promise the Gout tells him that, with a few months of good health, "will be forgotten like the forms of last year's clouds."

"The Handsome and Deformed Leg" divides the world into two classes, the happy, who fix their eyes on the bright

side of things and enjoy everything, and the unhappy, who fix their eyes on the dark side of things, and criticise everything; and thereby render themselves completely odious. An old philosophical friend of his, Franklin said, carefully avoided any intimacy with the latter class of people. He had, like other philosophers, a thermometer to show him the heat of the weather, and a barometer to mark when it was likely to prove good or bad; but, there being no instrument invented to discern at first sight whether a person had their unpleasant disposition, he, for that purpose, made use of his legs, one of which was remarkably handsome, and the other, by some accident, crooked and deformed. If a stranger, at the first interview, regarded his ugly leg more than his handsome one, he doubted him. If he spoke of it and took no notice of the handsome leg, that was sufficient to determine this philosopher to have no further acquaintance with him.

Everybody [concludes Franklin] has not this two-legged Instrument, but every one with a little Attention, may observe Signs of that carping, fault-finding Disposition, & take the same Resolution of avoiding the Acquaintance of those infected with it. I therefore advise those critical, querulous, discontented, unhappy People, that if they wish to be respected and belov'd by others, & happy in themselves they should *leave off looking at the ugly leg.*

"The Economical Project" is a happy combination of humor and prudential instruction, and was written about the time when the Quinquet lamp was an object of general public curiosity. An inquiry having been started on one occasion in his presence, Franklin says, as to whether its brightness was not offset by its lavish consumption of oil, he went home, and to bed, three or four hours after midnight, with his head full of the subject. At about six in the morning, he was awakened by a noise, and was surprised to find his room full of light. At

first, he imagined that he was surrounded by a number of Quinquet lamps, but, on rubbing his eyes, he perceived that the light came in at the windows, and, when he got up and looked out to see what caused it, he saw the sun just rising above the horizon. His servant had forgotten the preceding evening to close the shutters. Looking at his watch, and finding that it was but six o'clock, and still thinking it something extraordinary that the sun should rise so early, he consulted an almanac, and ascertained that it was just the hour for sunrise on that day, and, moreover, he learned from the almanac that the sun would rise still earlier every day till towards the end of June. His readers, he was sure, would be as much astonished as he was when they heard that the sun rises so early, and especially when he assured them that it gives light as soon as it rises. He was convinced of this. He was certain of his fact. One could not be more certain of any fact. On repeating his observation the three following mornings, he found always precisely the same result.

Yet when he spoke of the matter it was to incredulous countenances. One auditor, a learned natural philosopher, assured him that he must certainly be mistaken as to the light coming into his room, for, it being well known that there could be no light abroad at that hour, it followed that none could enter from without, and that, of consequence, his open windows, instead of letting in the light, must have only served to let out the darkness. This philosopher, Franklin confessed, puzzled him a little, but subsequent observation confirmed him in his first opinion. On the strength of these facts, Franklin enters upon a series of elaborate calculations to demonstrate that, between the 20th of March and 20th of September, the Parisians, because of their habit of preferring candlelight in the evening to sunlight in the morning, had consumed sixty-four millions and fifty thousand pounds of candles,

which, at an average price of thirty sols per pound, made ninety-six millions and seventy-five thousand livres tournois. An immense sum! that the City of Paris might save every year by the economy of using sunshine instead of candles; to say nothing of the period of the year during which the days are shorter. This computation is succeeded by a number of suggestions as to the different means by which such of the Parisians as did not amend their hours upon learning from this paper that it is daylight when the sun rises could be induced to reform their habits.

For his discovery, Franklin further said that he demanded neither place, pension, exclusive privilege nor any other reward whatever. He was looking only to the honor of it. He would not deny, when he was assailed by little, envious minds, that the ancients knew that the sun rises at certain hours. They too possibly had almanacs, but it does not follow that they knew that it gives light as soon as it rises. That was what he claimed as his discovery. It was certainly unknown to the moderns, at least to the Parisians; which to prove he need use but one plain, simple argument. It was impossible that a people as well-instructed, judicious and prudent as any in the world, all professing to be lovers of economy, and subject to onerous taxation, should have lived so long by the smoky, unwholesome and enormously expensive light of candles, if they had really known that they might have as much pure light of the sun for nothing.

A Letter from China in which a sailor, who had passed some time in that country, is made to narrate in a simple, bald way what he saw and experienced while there, is worth reading, if only because of the evidence that it furnishes that almost every trifle from Franklin's pen has a certain literary quality. One sentence in the letter at any rate possesses the true Franklin flavor; that in which the wanderer states that in China stealing, robbing and

housebreaking are punished severely, but that cheating is free there in everything, as cheating in horses is among gentlemen in England.

Other humorous or satirical compositions from the hand of Franklin belong to the period between his return from the French mission and his death.

His letter to the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on the *Abuse of the Press*, deprecates in a familiar and jocular way the scurrilous license which marked the newspaper controversies of the time. After recalling insulting epithets heaped upon other public servants, he mentions that he, too, the unanimous choice as President of the Council and Assembly of Pennsylvania, had been denounced as "*An old Rogue,*" who had given his assent to the Federal Constitution merely to avoid the refunding of money that he had purloined from the United States.

There is —indeed [the letter ends], a good deal of manifest *Inconsistency* in all this, and yet a Stranger, seeing it in your own Prints, tho' he does not believe it all, may probably believe enough of it to conclude, that Pennsylvania is peopled by a Set of the most unprincipled, wicked, rascally and quarrelsome Scoundrels upon the Face of the Globe. I have sometimes, indeed, suspected that those Papers are the Manufacture of foreign Enemies among you, who write with a view of disgracing your Country, and making you appear contemptible and detestable all the World over; but then I wonder at the Indiscretion of your Printers in publishing such Writings! There is, however, one of your *Inconsistencies* that consoles me a little, which is, that tho' *living*, you give one another the characters of Devils; *dead*, you are all Angels! It is delightful, when any of you die, to read what good Husbands, good Fathers, good Friends, good Citizens, and good Christians you were, concluding with a Scrap of Poetry that places you, with certainty, every one in Heaven. So that I think Pennsylvania a good country *to dye in*, though a very bad one to *live in*.

The *Comparison of the Conduct of the Ancient Jews and of the Anti-Federalists in the United States of America* belongs to the same category as *Plain Truth* rather than to the class of writings which Franklin termed "Bagatelles." The parallel, however, between the jealousy, worked upon by insidious men, pretending public good, but with nothing really in view except private interest, which led the Israelites to oppose the establishment of the New Constitution, after the flight from Egypt, and the hostility of the Anti-Federalists to the work of the Convention of 1787, is pursued with such cleverness as to lift it out of the province of the ordinary newspaper essay. There is an unwonted strain of solemnity in its last sentences.

> To conclude [Franklin declares], I beg I may not be understood to infer, that our General Convention was divinely inspired, when it form'd the new federal Constitution, merely because that Constitution has been unreasonably and vehemently opposed; yet I must own I have so much Faith in the general Government of the world by *Providence*, that I can hardly conceive a Transaction of such momentous Importance to the Welfare of Millions now existing, and to exist in the Posterity of a great Nation, should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenc'd, guided, and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent and beneficent Ruler, in whom all inferior Spirits live, and move, and have their Being.

Of the *Account of the Supremest Court of Judicature in Pennsylvania, viz., the Court of the Press*, in which Franklin suggested that formal cognizance should be taken of the Cudgel as well as of the Liberty of the Press, we have already said enough.

The pretended speech of Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a member of the Divan of Algiers against the Petition of the Erika or Purists, asking that Piracy and Slavery be abolished, was written by him on the eve of his death,

and is one of his best satirical thrusts. It was a parody on a speech that had been lately delivered in Congress in defence of negro slavery by Mr. Jackson of Georgia, and its wit consists in the art with which it appositely urges in justification of the Algerian practice of plundering and enslaving Christians all the considerations urged by Jackson in his plea for African slavery. In his letter, conveying Sidi's speech to the *Federal Gazette*, Franklin states that it might be found in Martin's Account of the former's consulship, anno 1687, and we are told that this statement caused many persons to apply to bookstores and libraries for Martin's supposed work. Then, as now, there could be no better means for determining how matter-of-fact a person was than to test his sense of humor with one of Franklin's facetious cheats.

The exact time at which the *Petition of the Left Hand to those who have the Superintendency of Education* was written is unknown. Its *motif* is not unlike that of the *Petition of the Letter Z*. It complains that from infancy the petitioner had been led to consider her sister as a being of more elevated rank. She had been suffered to grow up without the least instruction while nothing was spared in the education of the latter, who had had masters to teach her writing, drawing, music and other accomplishments. If by chance the Petitioner touched a pencil, a pen or a needle, she was bitterly rebuked, and more than once had been beaten for being awkward and wanting a graceful manner.

> But conceive not Sirs [says the left hand further], that my complaints are instigated merely by vanity. No; my uneasiness is occasioned by an object much more serious. It is the practice in our family, that the whole business of providing for its subsistence falls upon my sister and myself. If any indisposition should attack my sister,—and I mention it in confidence upon this occasion, that she is subject to the gout, the rheumatism, and cramp, without making mention of other

accidents,—what would be the fate of our poor family? Must not the regret of our parents be excessive, at having placed so great a difference between sisters who are so perfectly equal? Alas! we must perish from distress; for it would not be in my power even to scrawl a suppliant petition for relief, having been obliged to employ the hand of another in transcribing the request which I have now the honour to prefer to you.

One of the essays of Franklin is an essay which he termed a "bagatelle," but which is of a different cast from most of his papers bearing that designation. This is the essay on the *Morals of Chess*. As a mere literary production, it possesses remarkable merit, but it is more valuable still for the singular union of wisdom and benevolence found in all of the writer's precepts relating to the conduct of life. It is only upon the contracted face of an ordinary chess-board that the sagacious reflections and salutary counsels of this paper are based, but many of them are quite extensive enough in their application to be suitable for the morals of the wider chess-board on which men and women themselves are the pawns, and the universal currents of human nature and human existence the players. By playing at chess, Franklin thought, we may learn foresight, circumspection, caution and hopefulness. When playing it, if the agreement is that the rules of the game shall be strictly observed, they should be strictly observed by both parties. If the agreement is that they shall not be strictly observed, one party should claim no indulgence for himself that he is not willing to grant to his adversary. No false move should ever be made by a player to extricate himself from a difficulty or to gain an advantage. There can be no pleasure in playing with a person once detected in such an unfair practice. If your adversary is long in playing, you should not hurry him, or express any uneasiness at his delay, nor sing, nor whistle, nor look at your watch, nor take up a book to read, nor tap with your feet on the floor, or with your

fingers on the table, nor do anything that may disturb his attention. For all these things displease, and they do not show your skill in playing but your craftiness or your rudeness.

You should not endeavor to amuse and deceive your adversary by pretending to have made bad moves in order to render him confident and careless and inattentive to your schemes. This is fraud and deceit, not skill. If you gain the victory, you should not give way to exultation or insult, nor show too much pleasure. On the contrary, you should endeavor to console your adversary, and soothe his wounded pride by every sort of civil expression that may be used with truth, such as, "You understand the game better than I, but you are a little inattentive," or "You play too fast," or "You had the best of the game, but something happened to divert your thoughts, and that turned it in my favour." If you are simply a spectator, you should observe the most perfect silence; for, if you give advice, you offend both parties, him, against whom you give it, because it may cause the loss of his game, him, in whose favour you give it, because though it be good, and he follows it, he loses the pleasure he might have had, if you had permitted him to think until it had occurred to himself.

And thus this essay, so full of wholesome, kind advice from a counsellor, who loved men none the less because he knew all their failings and foibles as well as virtues, continues a little longer, until the reader, already won over to its perfect rectitude of sentiment and purpose, entirely forgets how obvious are all the truisms of its stating that he has so often offended. The measure of self-abnegation, suggested by the conclusion of the essay, is, we fear, rather too exacting for the tug of chess-board selfishness upon the weaker side of human nature. If it is agreed that the rules of the game are not to be rigorously enforced,

then, says Franklin, moderate your desire of victory over your adversary, and be pleased with one over yourself. Do not snatch eagerly at every advantage offered by his unskilfulness or inattention, but point out to him kindly that by such a move he places or leaves a piece in danger and unsupported; or that by another he will put his king in a perilous situation &c. "By this generous civility (so opposite to the unfairness above forbidden) you may, indeed, happen to lose the game to your opponent," the close of the essay declares, "but you will win what is better, his esteem, his respect, and his affection, together with the silent approbation and goodwill of impartial spectators."

We shall not linger upon the letters of Franklin. The substance of them has already been worked into this book too freely for that. It is sufficient to say that they are among the very best in the English language. It would be idle to compare them with those of Gray, Horace Walpole, Cowper, Byron or Fitzgerald, the acknowledged masters of that form of composition. Franklin was not a conscious man of letters at all, and is not to be judged by such academic standards. If he was, we might say that Cowper aerated with a little of Walpole most nearly, though, after all, but remotely, suggests a true conception of what Franklin was as a letter-writer. Few men were ever saner than Cowper was during his really lucid intervals; but then Cowper was not a man of business, a statesman or a philosopher, and the elixir of Walpole's gaiety differs from that of Franklin's as a stimulant of the wine-shop differs from fresh air and sunshine. The official and semi-official letters of Franklin contain some of the most solid and sagacious of his reflections and observations on political topics. His familiar letters to his kinsfolk and friends often run out into thoughts upon the management of our individual lives and our relations to the visible and invisible universe which are likely to be

a part of the currency of human wisdom as long as human society lasts. And almost all of his known letters have value enough to make us feel, when still another of the thousands written by him happens to be reclaimed from loss, as Reuben in his parable might have felt, if he had recovered his precious axe.

Among the cleverest of his letters was his familiar one to his daughter on the Order of the Cincinnati. If his advice had been asked, he said, he perhaps would not have objected to their wearing their ribbon and badge themselves, if they derived pleasure from such trivial things, but he certainly should have objected to the idea of making the honor hereditary. And this was the amusing and original way in which he presented his views on the subject:

For Honour, worthily obtain'd (as for Example that of our Officers), is in its Nature a *personal* Thing, and incommunicable to any but those who had some Share in obtaining it. Thus among the Chinese, the most ancient, and from long Experience the wisest of Nations, honour does not *descend*, but *ascends*. If a man from his Learning, his Wisdom, or his Valour, is promoted by the Emperor to the Rank of Mandarin, his Parents are immediately entitled to all the same Ceremonies of Respect from the People, that are establish'd as due to the Mandarin himself; on the supposition that it must have been owing to the Education, Instruction, and good Example afforded him by his Parents, that he was rendered capable of serving the Publick.

This *ascending* Honour is therefore useful to the State, as it encourages Parents to give their Children a good and virtuous Education. But the *descending Honour*, to Posterity who could have no Share in obtaining it, is not only groundless and absurd, but often hurtful to that Posterity, since it is apt to make them proud, disdaining to be employ'd in useful Arts, and thence falling into Poverty, and all the Meannesses, Servility, and Wretchedness attending it; which is the present case with much of what is called the *Noblesse* in Europe. Or if

to keep up the Dignity of the Family, Estates are entailed entire on the Eldest male heir, another Pest to Industry and Improvement of the Country is introduc'd, which will be followed by all the odious mixture of pride and Beggary, and idleness, that have half depopulated [and *decultivated*] Spain; occasioning continual Extinction of Families by the Discouragements of Marriage [and neglect in the improvement of estates].

I wish, therefore, that the Cincinnati, if they must go on with their Project, would direct the Badges of their Order to be worn by their Parents, instead of handing them down to their Children. It would be a good Precedent, and might have good Effects. It would also be a kind of Obedience to the Fourth Commandment, in which God enjoins us to *honour* our Father and Mother, but has nowhere directed us to honour our Children. And certainly no mode of honouring those immediate Authors of our Being can be more effectual, than that of doing praiseworthy Actions, which reflect Honour on those who gave us our Education; or more becoming, than that of manifesting, by some public Expression or Token, that it is to their Instruction and Example we ascribe the Merit of those Actions.

But the Absurdity of *descending Honours* is not a mere Matter of philosophical Opinion; it is capable of mathematical Demonstration. A Man's Son, for instance, is but half of his Family, the other half belonging to the Family of his Wife. His Son, too, marrying into another Family, his Share in the Grandson is but a fourth; in the Great Grandson, by the same Process, it is but an Eighth; in the next Generation a Sixteenth; the next a Thirty-second; the next a Sixty-fourth; the next an Hundred and Twenty-eighth; the next a Two hundred and Fifty-sixth; and the next a Five hundred and twelfth; thus in nine Generations, which will not require more than 300 years (no very great Antiquity for a Family), our present Chevalier of the Order of Cincinnatus's Share in the then existing Knight, will be but a 512th part; which, allowing the present certain Fidelity of American Wives to be insur'd down through all those Nine Generations, is so small a Consideration, that methinks no reasonable Man would hazard for the

sake of it the disagreeable Consequences of the Jealousy, Envy, and Ill will of his Countrymen.

Let us go back with our Calculation from this young Noble, the 512th part of the present Knight, thro' his nine Generations, till we return to the year of the Institution. He must have had a Father and Mother, they are two. Each of them had a Father and Mother, they are four. Those of the next preceding Generation will be eight, the next Sixteen, the next thirty-two, the next sixty-four, the next one hundred and Twenty-eight, the next Two hundred and fifty-six, and the ninth in this Retrocession Five hundred and twelve, who must be now existing, and all contribute their Proportion of this future *Chevalier de Cincinnatus*. These, with the rest, make together as follows:

2
4
8
16
32
64
128
256
512

1022

One Thousand and Twenty-two Men and Women, contributors to the formation of one Knight. And if we are to have a Thousand of these future Knights, there must be now and hereafter existing One Million and Twenty-two Thousand Fathers and Mothers, who are to contribute to their Production, unless a Part of the Number are employ'd in making more Knights than One. Let us strike off then the 22,000, on the Supposition of this double Employ, and then consider whether, after a reasonable Estimation of the Number of Rogues, and Fools, and Royalists and Scoundrels and Prostitutes, that are mix'd with, and help to make up necessarily their Million of Predecessors, Posterity will have much reason to boast of the noble Blood of the then existing Set of Chevaliers de Cincinnatus. [The future genealogists, too, of these

Chevaliers, in proving the lineal descent of their honour through so many generations (even supposing honour capable in its nature of descending), will only prove the small share of this honour, which can be justly claimed by any one of them; since the above simple process in arithmetic makes it quite plain and clear that, in proportion as the antiquity of the family shall augment, the right to the honour of the ancestor will diminish; and a few generations more would reduce it to something so small as to be very near an absolute nullity.] I hope, therefore, that the Order will drop this part of their project, and content themselves, as the Knights of the Garter, Bath, Thistle, St. Louis, and other Orders of Europe do, with a Life Enjoyment of their little Badge and Ribband, and let the Distinction die with those who have merited it. This I imagine will give no offence. For my own part, I shall think it a Convenience, when I go into a Company where there may be Faces unknown to me, if I discover, by this Badge, the Persons who merit some particular Expression of my Respect; and it will save modest Virtue the Trouble of calling for our Regard, by awkward roundabout Intimations of having been heretofore employ'd in the Continental Service.

The Gentleman, who made the Voyage to France to provide the Ribands and Medals, has executed his Commission. To me they seem tolerably done; but all such Things are criticis'd. Some find Fault with the Latin, as wanting classic Elegance and Correctness; and, since our Nine Universities were not able to furnish better Latin, it was pity, they say, that the Mottos had not been in English. Others object to the Title, as not properly assumable by any but Gen. Washington, [and a few others] who serv'd without Pay. Others object to the *Bald Eagle* as looking too much like a *Dindon*, or Turkey. For my own Part, I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen as the Representative of our Country; he is a Bird of bad moral Character; he does not get his living honestly; you may have seen him perch'd on some dead Tree, near the River where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the Labour of the Fishing-Hawk; and, when that diligent Bird has at length taken a Fish, and is bearing it to his Nest for the support of his Mate and young ones, the Bald Eagle pursues him, and takes it

from him. With all this Injustice he is never in good Case; but, like those among Men who live by Sharping and Robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. Besides, he is a rank Coward; the little *King Bird*, not bigger than a Sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the District. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America, who have driven all the *King-birds* from our Country; though exactly fit for that Order of Knights, which the French call *Chevaliers d'Industrie*.

I am, on this account, not displeas'd that the Figure is not known as a Bald Eagle, but looks more like a Turk'y. For in Truth, the Turk'y is in comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America. Eagles have been found in all Countries, but the Turk'y was peculiar to ours; the first of the Species seen in Europe being brought to France by the Jesuits from Canada, and serv'd up at the Wedding Table of Charles the Ninth. He is, [though a little vain and silly, it is true, but not the worse emblem for that,] a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards, who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a *red* Coat on.

Nor need we dwell longer either upon Franklin as a poet. Considered seriously as such, he was undoubtedly one of the kind, that, as Horace says, neither Gods nor men can endure. But he should not be seriously regarded as a poet at all. We should bring no severer judgment, to his couplets than was brought to them by the plowmen and frontiersmen, who kept *Poor Richard's Almanac* suspended over their mantelpieces; and his anacreontics should be read, as they were sung, after the edge of criticism has been dulled by a bottle or so. It is only fair to Poor Richard, however, to say that no one had a poorer opinion of his gifts as a poet than himself. "I know as thee," he says in one of his prefaces, "that I am no *Poet born:* and it is a Trade I never learnt, nor indeed could learn. *If I make Verses, 'tis in Spight of Nature and my Stars, I write.*" In another preface, after honoring his friend

Taylor, of Ephemerides fame, with a considerable number of lines, he exclaims: "Souse down into Prose again, my Muse; for Poetry's no more thy Element, than Air is that of the Flying-Fish." And we need go no further than one of Franklin's lively letters to Polly, at which we have already glanced, to satisfy ourselves that he placed quite as low an estimate on his verses as Poor Richard did on his. Speaking of the Muse, which he mentioned in his letter as having visited him that morning, he observes in his light-hearted way:

> This Muse appear'd to be no Housewife. I suppose few of them are. She was *drest* (if the Expression is allowable) in an *Undress*, a kind of slatternly *Negligée*, neither neat nor clean, nor well made; and she has given the same sort of Dress to my Piece. On reviewing it, I would have reform'd the lines and made them all of a Length, as I am told Lines ought to be; but I find I can't lengthen the short ones without stretching them on the Rack, and I think it would be equally cruel to cut off any Part of the long ones. Besides the Superfluity of *these* makes up for the Deficiency of *those;* and so, from a Principle of Justice, I leave them at full Length, that I may give you, at least in one Sense of the Word, *good Measure.*

Of all the productions of Franklin, the *Autobiography* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*, are those upon which his literary fame will chiefly rest. Of the former, we have already said too much to say much more about it. It is the only thing written by Franklin that can properly be called a book, and even it is marked by the brevity which he regarded as one of the essentials of good writing. If he did not write other books, it was not, so far as we can see, because, as has been charged, he lacked constructive capacity, but rather because, when he resorted to the pen, he did it not for literary celebrity, but for practical purposes of the hour, best subserved by brief essays or papers. It is true that in writing the early chapters of

the *Autobiography*, which brought his life down to the year 1730, he was not exactly writing for the moment, but, still, the motive by which he was actuated was a purely practical one. "They were written to my Son," he said in a letter to Matthew Carey, "and intended only as Information to my Family." Even in the later chapters, which brought his life down to his fiftieth year, he still had a similar incentive to literary effort, highly congenial with the general bent of his character, that is to say, the opportunity that they afforded him to point to his business success as an example of what might be accomplished by frugality and industry. "What is to follow," he wrote to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, "will be of more important Transactions: But it seems to me that what is done will be of more general Use to young Readers; as exemplifying strongly the Effects of prudent and imprudent Conduct in the Commencement of a Life of Business." Two days later, he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan from Philadelphia that he was diligently employed in writing the *Autobiography*, to which his persuasions had not a little contributed.

> To shorten the work [he said], as well as for other reasons, I omit all facts and transactions, that may not have a tendency to benefit the young reader, by showing him from my example, and my success in emerging from poverty, and acquiring some degree of wealth, power, and reputation, the advantages of certain modes of conduct which I observed, and of avoiding the errors which were prejudicial to me.

To the limited nature of the inducements to the composition of the *Autobiography*, disclosed by these letters, it was due that the interest of Franklin in the subsequent continuation of the work was too languid for the completion of the whole plan of the *Autobiography*, as intimated in the Hints which he gives of its intended scope,

notwithstanding the urgent appeals which his friends never ceased to make to him to complete it.

If one of the effects of the fearless self-arraignment of the *Autobiography* has been to lower the standing of Franklin in some respects with posterity, we should remember the unselfish motive, which induced him to turn his youthful errors to the profit of others, and also the fact that he had his own misgivings about the bearing upon his reputation of such outspoken self-exposure, and submitted the propriety of publishing the *Autobiography* unreservedly to the judgment of friends who were certainly competent judges in every regard of what the moral sense of their time would approve.

I am not without my Doubts concerning the Memoirs, whether it would be proper to publish them, or not, at least during my Life time [he wrote to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld], and I am persuaded there are many Things that would, in Case of Publication, be best omitted; I therefore request it most earnestly of you, my dear Friend, that you would examine them carefully & critically, with M. Le Veillard, and give me your candid & friendly Advice thereupon, as soon as you can conveniently.

Later, he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan from Philadelphia that he had, of late, been so interrupted by extreme pain, which obliged him to have recourse to opium, that, between the effects of both, he had but little time, in which he could write anything, but that his grandson was copying what was done, which would be sent to Vaughan for his opinion by the next vessel; for he found it a difficult task to speak decently and properly of one's own conduct, and felt the want of a judicious friend to encourage him in scratching out. The next time that Franklin wrote to Vaughan it was when opium alone could render existence tolerable to him, but in the interim, he had happily discovered that he could dictate even when he could not write.

What is already done [he said] I now send you, with an earnest request that you and my good friend Dr. Price [later in the letter he calls him "my dear Dr. Price"] would be so good as to take the trouble of reading it, critically examining it, and giving me your candid opinion whether I had best publish or suppress it; and if the first, then what parts had better be expunged or altered. I shall rely upon your opinions, for I am now grown so old and feeble in mind, as well as body, that I can not place any confidence in my own judgment.

Of the same tenor was a still later letter to M. Le Veillard, in which Franklin expressed the hope that Le Veillard would, with the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, read the Memoirs over carefully, examine them critically and send him his friendly, candid opinion of the parts that he would advise him to correct or expunge, in case he should think that the work was generally proper to be published, but, if he judged otherwise, that he would inform him of that fact, too, as soon as possible, and prevent him from incurring further trouble in the endeavor to finish the work. The world has reason to be thankful that the fate of the *Autobiography* should thus have been left to the decision of men who, even if they had not lived in the eighteenth century, would have been robust enough, in point of intelligence and morals, to believe that the youthful *errata* laid bare in that book were more than atoned for by the manly and generous aims that inspired it.

Of the *Autobiography* it is enough now to say that it is one of the few books which have arrested and permanently riveted the attention of the whole civilized world. Commenting in it on the copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*, "in Dutch, finely printed on good paper, with copper cuts," which the drunken Dutchman, whom he drew up by the shock-pate from the waters of New York Bay, on his first journey to Philadelphia, handed to him to dry, Franklin says: "I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more

generally read than any other book, except perhaps the Bible." The *Autobiography* is hardly less popular. It, too, has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and has been printed and reprinted until it is one of the most widely-read books in existence. Such it is likely to remain always, not simply because it was written by a very famous man, who possessed, to an extraordinary degree, the power of impressing his thoughts and fancies on the hearts and imagination of the human race, but because it tells a story of self-conquest and self-promotion full of warning, guidance and hope for every human being, who wishes to make the best of his own opportunities and powers. As a mere composition, dressed though it is like the poetic Muse described by Franklin in his letter to Polly "in a kind of slatternly Négligee," it is one of the masterpieces of literature. Its very careless loquacity is but suggestive of a mind overflowing with its own profusion of experience and reflection. There is no better test of the extent, to which a writer has proved himself equal to the highest possibilities of his art, than to ask how readily his conceptions can be pictured; for the mind of a great writer is but a gallery hung with such pictures as the painter reduces to material form and color. Tried by this test, the universal popularity of the *Autobiography* can be readily understood. The Book of Genesis, the plays of Shakespeare, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the novels of Sir Walter Scott, are not more easily illustrated than are the incidents depicted to the life in its early chapters. Some of them wear a hard and coarse aspect as if they had been struck off from ruder plates than any belonging to the present state of the art of engraving, but this is only another proof of the fidelity of Franklin to his eighteenth century background. We might as well quarrel with the squalor and sluttishess of Hogarth's scenes.

Poor Richard's Almanac, including the "Way to Wealth," or Father Abraham's Speech is Franklin's other

master-work. One would hardly look to almanac-making for a classic contribution to letters, but it is not extravagant to say that Poor Richard is one of the most life-like figures in the literature of the world. Nestor, Falstaff, Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, Sir Roger de Coverley, Captain Dugald Dalgetty and Colonel Newcome are not more distinctly delineated, or rather we should say are not more manifest to the eye and palpable to the touch. To the people of Pennsylvania, its tradesmen, its farmers, even its rude borderers, he was a personage fully as real as the colonial governor at Philadelphia, and far more popular. Thousands of its inhabitants never turned over the pages of any other book except those of the Bible. And finally the wise sayings of Poor Richard, in the form of the "Way to Wealth," applicable as they were to the primal and universal conditions of human existence everywhere, became known from the Thames to the Ganges. The middle of the eighteenth century was the heyday of almanac-making, and the best proof of the durable stuff, of which *Poor Richard's Almanac* was woven, is the utter oblivion that has overtaken all his competitors except those who are preserved in his pages like flies in amber. The prefaces of *Poor Richard*, the proverbial maxims with which his almanacs are bestrewn, the compendious speech on which these maxims are finally strung like bright beads, have survived, because they were adapted, with consummate art, to the simple habits and mental wants of the rude audience, to which they were addressed. For upwards of thirty years, Poor Richard, with a distinctness and consistency of character as perfect as those of Santa Claus, made his annual bow to the People of Pennsylvania, and served up to their delighted palates his highly seasoned *ollapodrida* of mock astrology, homely wisdom and coarse jollity in prose and verse. Sometimes the humor is mere horse laughter. But always the shrewd, worldly-wise, merry-tempered old philomath and star-

gazer hits the fancy of his readers with unerring accuracy between wind and water. His weather predictions and prognostications of planetary conjunctions are just serious enough for unlettered rustics whose minds have been partially but not wholly disabused of the belief that rain comes with the change of the moon. His proverbs are the proverbs of men whose lives are too meagre and straitened to permit them to forget his saying that if you will not hear Reason she'll surely rap your knuckles. His humor is the humor of men whose grave, weather-beaten features do not relax into a smile or grin except under the compelling influence of some broad joke or ridiculous spectacle. Just as the most successful inventor is the one who invents the device that has the widest application to material uses, so the most successful writer is the one who conceives the thoughts that have the widest application to the moral and intellectual needs of mankind. The thoughts that Poor Richard conceived or adopted are such thoughts; for what he taught was full of significance to every man who desires to obtain a correct insight into the moral and economic laws that govern the world for the purpose of winning its favor; which means all men except those who either prey on the world or merely drift along with its current.

In the Prefaces to his *Almanac*, Poor Richard manages to keep both his wife Bridget and himself close to the footlights. In the first preface, he says that, if he were to declare that he wrote almanacs with no other view than of the public good, he should not be sincere.

> The plain Truth of the Matter is [he confesses], I am excessive poor, and my Wife, good Woman, is, I tell her, excessive proud; she cannot bear, she says, to sit spinning in her Shift of Tow, while I do nothing but gaze at the Stars; and has threatned more than once to burn all my Books and Rattling-Traps (as she calls my Instruments) if I do not make some profitable Use of them for the Good of my Family.

In the preface of the succeeding year he announces that the patronage of his readers the year before had made his circumstances much easier. His wife had been enabled to get a pot of her own, and was no longer obliged to borrow one from a neighbor; nor had they ever since been without something of their own to put in it. She had also got a pair of shoes, two new shifts, and a new, warm petticoat, and for his part he had bought a second-hand coat, so good that he was no longer ashamed to go to town or be seen there. These things had rendered Bridget's temper so much more pacific than it used to be that he might say that he had slept more, and more quietly within the last year than in the three foregoing years put together.

In a later preface, he declares that, if the generous purchaser of his labors could see how often his fi-pence helped to light up the comfortable fire, line the pot, fill the cup and make glad the heart of a poor man and an honest good old woman, he would not think his money ill laid out, though the almanac of his Friend and Servant, R. Saunders, were one half blank paper.

A year later, Mistress Saunders avails herself of the fact that her good man had set out the week before for Potowmack to visit an old stargazer of his acquaintance, and to see about a little place for the couple to settle, and end their days on, to scratch out the preface to the copy of the almanac for that year which he had left behind him for the press, because it had undertaken to let the world know that she, who had already been held out in former prefaces as proud and loud and the possessor of a new petticoat, had lately, forsooth, taken a fancy to drink a little tea now and then. Upon looking over the months, she saw that he had put in abundance of foul weather this year, and therefore she had scattered here and there, where she could find room, some fair, pleasant sunshiny days for the good women to dry their clothes in. If what she promised did not come to pass, she would at any rate have shown her goodwill.

In the next preface, referring to the impression that the great yearly demand for his almanac had made him so rich that he should call himself Poor Dick no longer, and pretending that he and the printer were different persons, Poor Richard says:

When I first begun to publish, the Printer made a fair Agreement with me for my copies, by Virtue of which he runs *away with* the greatest Part of the Profit—However much good may't do him; I do not grudge it him; he is a Man I have a great Regard for, and I wish his Profit ten times greater than it is. For I am, dear Reader, his as well as thy

Affectionate Friend,
R. SAUNDERS.

But the five pence came in too rapidly for the almanac-maker to persist in putting up a poor mouth of this kind. In his twelfth year, after frankly admitting that he had labored not for the benefit of the public but for the benefit of his own dear self, not forgetting in the meantime his gracious consort and Duchess, the peaceful, quiet, silent Lady Bridget, he states that, whether his labors had been of any service to the public or not, he must acknowledge that they had been of service to him.

It was by such personal touches as these that Poor Richard made Bridget and himself as familiar to his patrons as the signs of the Zodiac. Astrology itself was, of course, too good a subject for keen ridicule to be spared. Formerly, Poor Richard declares in one preface, no prince would make war or peace, nor any general fight a battle without first consulting an astrologer, who examined the aspects and configurations of the heavenly bodies, and marked the lucky hour. But "now," he goes on, "the noble art (more shame to the age we live in) is dwindled into contempt; the Great neglect us, Empires make Leagues, and Parliaments Laws without advising with us; and scarce any other use is made of our learned

labours than to find the best time of cutting corns or gelding Pigs."

In many sly ways, Poor Richard let his readers know that his forecasts are not to be accepted too seriously. It is no wonder, he says in his fifth preface, that, among the multitude of astrological predictions, some few should fail; for, without any defect in the art itself, 'tis well known that a small error, a single wrong figure overseen in a calculation, may occasion great mistakes, but, however the almanac-makers might miss it in other things, he believed it would be generally allowed that they always hit the day of the month, and that, he supposed, was esteemed one of the most useful things in an almanac. In another issue of the almanac, he indulges in a great variety of confident predictions as to the year 1739. The crabs will go sidelong and the rope-makers backwards, the belly will wag before, and another part of the body, which we shall not name, but he does, will sit down first, Mercury will so confound the speech of people that, when a Pennsylvanian will wish to say panther, he will say *painter*, and, when a New Yorker will attempt to say *this*, he will say *diss*, and the people of New England and Cape May will not be able to say *cow* for their lives, but will be forced to say *keow* by a certain involuntary twist in the root of their tongues. As for Connecticut men and Marylanders, they will not be able to open their mouths but *sir* shall be the first or last syllable they will pronounce, and sometimes both.

Some of his other predictions are that the stone blind will see but very little, the deaf will hear but poorly and the dumb will not speak very plain, while whole flocks, herds and droves of sheep, swine and oxen, cocks and hens, ducks and drakes, geese and ganders will go to pot, but the mortality will not be altogether so great among cats, dogs and horses. As for age, it will be incurable because of the years past, and, towards the fall, some people will be seized

with an unaccountable inclination to eat their own ears. But the worst disease of all will be a certain most horrid, dreadful, malignant, catching, perverse and odious malady, almost epidemical, insomuch that many will run mad upon it. "I quake for very Fear," exclaims Poor Richard, "when I think on't; for I assure you very few will escape this Disease, which is called by the learned Albumazar *Lacko'mony.*"

That the orange trees in Greenland will go near to fare the worse for the cold, that oats will be a great help to horses and that there will not be much more bacon than swine, are still other prophecies hazarded by the astrologer.

In another preface, he declares that he has gone into retirement, and that it is time for an old man such as he is to think of preparing for his Great Remove. Then follow these impatient statements:

The perpetual Teasing of both Neighbours and Strangers, to calculate Nativities, give Judgments on Schemes, erect Figures, discover Thieves, detect Horse-Stealers, describe the Route of Run-a-ways and stray'd Cattle; the Croud of Visitors with a 1000 trifling Questions; *will my Ship return Safe? Will my Mare win the Race? Will her next Colt be a Pacer? When will my Wife die? Who shall be my Husband, and HOW LONG first? When is the best time to cut Hair, trim Locks or sow Sallad?* These and the like Impertinences I have now neither Taste nor Leisure for. I have had enough of 'em. All that these angry Folks can say, will never provoke me to tell them where I live. I would eat my Nails first.

At times the horse laughter is even slightly flavored with the stercoraceous smell of the stable.

Ignorant Men [says Poor Richard in his seventh preface] wonder how we Astrologers foretell the Weather so exactly, unless we deal with the old black Devil. Alas! 'tis as easy as . . . For Instance; the Stargazer peeps at the heavens thro'

a long Glass: He sees perhaps TAURUS, or the Great Bull, in a mighty Chafe, stamping on the Floor of his House, swinging his Tail about, stretching out his Neck, and opening wide his Mouth. 'Tis natural from these Appearances to judge that this furious Bull is puffing, blowing and roaring. Distance being consider'd and Time allow'd for all this to come down, there you have Wind and Thunder. He spies perhaps VIRGO (or the Virgin;) she turns her Head round as it were to see if anybody observ'd her; then crouching down gently, with her Hands on her Knees, she looks wistfully for a while right forward. He judges rightly what she's about: And having calculated the Distance and allow'd Time for its Falling, finds that next Spring we shall have a fine *April* shower.

In his preface for 1754, Poor Richard advances the proposition that the first astrologers were honest husbandmen, and he proceeds to prove it partly by the names of the Zodiacal signs, which were related for the most part, he asserts, to rural affairs. The Ram, the Bull, the Twins, the Crab, the Lion, the Wench, the Balance, the Scorpion, the Archer, the Goat, the Waterbearer, the Fish, one by one he tells them off in the course of his demonstration, making his own comments on their several meanings as he goes along. The Lion and the Wench, he says, were intended by the Ancients to mark the summer months and dog days when those creatures were most mischievous. The Balance, one of the autumnal signs, was intended by them to mark out the time for weighing and selling the summer's produce, or for holding courts of justice in which they might plague themselves and their neighbors. The Scorpion, with the sting in his tail, certainly denoted the paying of costs. The Goat accompanies the short days and long nights of winter, to show the season of mirth, feasting and jollity; for what could Capricorn mean but dancing or cutting of capers? Lastly came Pisces, or the two Shads, to signify the approaching return of those fish up the rivers. "Make your Wears, hawl your Seins, Catch

'em and pickle 'em, my Friends," advised Poor Richard "they are excellent Relishars of Old Cyder."

But Poor Richard's prefaces are not altogether made up of hearty, hilarious jests and loud guffaws. The raillery, with which he plies his rival philomath, Titan Leeds, would be as admirable as any humor in his writings, if it were not borrowed so manifestly from Dean Swift's ridicule of Partridge, the almanac-maker. In his very first preface in 1733, he says that he would have published an almanac many years before had he not been restrained by his regard for his good friend and fellow-student, Mr. Titan Leeds, whose interest he was extremely unwilling to hurt.

> But this Obstacle (I am far from speaking it with Pleasure) [declares Poor Richard] is soon to be removed, since inexorable Death, who was never known to respect Merit, has already prepared the mortal Dart, the fatal Sister has already extended her destroying Shears, and that ingenious Man must soon be taken from us. He dies, by my Calculation made at his Request, on Oct. 17, 1733. 3 h. 29 m. P.M. at the very instant of the ☌ of ☉ and ☿. By his own Calculation he will survive till the 26th of the same Month. This small Difference between us we have disputed whenever we have met these 9 Years past; but at length he is inclinable to agree with my Judgment: Which of us is most exact, a little Time will now determine. As therefore these Provinces may not longer expect to see any of his Performances after this Year, I think myself free to take up the Task, and request a share of the publick Encouragement.

To these assertions Leeds returned a hot answer in his American Almanac for the succeeding year. Notwithstanding the false prediction of the writer, who proposed to succeed him in the writing of almanacs, he had, he said, by the mercy of God lived to write a diary for the year 1734 and to publish the folly and ignorance of the presumptuous author, whom he did not scruple, in the rising tide of his wrath, to term "a Fool and a Lyar" and "a

conceited Scribler." This, of course, was just what Poor Richard was calculating on. In his next preface, he is at his very best.

In the Preface to my last Almanack [he says], I foretold the Death of my dear old Friend and Fellow-Student, the learned and ingenious Mr. *Titan Leeds*, which was to be on the 17th of *October*, 1733, 3 h. 29 m. P.M. at the very Instant of the ☌ of ☉ and ☿. By his own Calculation he was to survive till the 26th of the same Month, and expire in the Time of the Eclipse, near 11 o'clock A.M. At which of these Times he died, or whether he be really yet dead, I can not at this present Writing positively assure my Readers; forasmuch as a Disorder in my own Family demanded my Presence, and would not permit me as I had intended, to be with him in his last Moments, to receive his last Embrace, to close his Eyes, and do the Duty of a Friend in performing the last Offices to the Departed. Therefore it is that I can not positively affirm whether he be dead or not; for the Stars only show to the Skilful, what will happen in the natural and universal Chain of Causes and Effects; but 'tis well known, that the Events which would otherwise certainly happen at certain Times in the Course of Nature are sometimes set aside or postpon'd for wise and good Reasons by the immediate particular Dispositions of Providence; which particular Dispositions the Stars can by no Means discover or foreshow. There is however (and I can not speak it without Sorrow) there is the strongest Probability that my dear Friend is no more; for there appears in his Name, as I am assured, an Almanack for the year 1734, in which I am treated in a very gross and unhandsome Manner; in which I am called *a false Predicter, an Ignorant, a conceited Scribler, a Fool, and a Lyar*. Mr. Leeds was too well bred to use any Man so indecently and so scurrilously, and moreover his Esteem and Affection for me was extraordinary: So that it is to be feared that Pamphlet may be only a Contrivance of somebody or other, who hopes perhaps to sell two or three Years Almanacks still, by the sole Force and Virtue of Mr. *Leed's* Name; but certainly, to put Words into the Mouth of a Gentleman and a Man of Letters, against his Friend, which

the meanest and most scandalous of the People might be asham'd to utter even in a drunken Quarrel, is an unpardonable Injury to his Memory, and an Imposition upon the Publick.

Mr. *Leeds* was not only profoundly skilful in the useful Science he profess'd, but he was a Man of *exemplary* Sobriety, a most *sincere Friend*, and an *exact Performer of his Word*. These valuable Qualifications, with many others so much endear'd him to me, that although it should be so, that, contrary to all Probability, contrary to my Prediction and his own, he might possibly be yet alive, yet my Loss of Honour as a Prognosticator, can not afford me so much Mortification, as his Life, Health and Safety would give me Joy and Satisfaction.

By these observations, the burden was again imposed upon Titan Leeds of demonstrating that he was still alive, and accordingly in his next preface his indignant shade did not fail to take notice of them.

But, with the succeeding revolution of the earth about the sun, Poor Richard was at his sport again.

Whatever may be the Musick of the Spheres [he said], how great soever the Harmony of the Stars, 'tis certain there is no Harmony among the Stargazers; but they are perpetually growling and snarling at one another like strange Curs, or like some Men at their Wives: I had resolved to keep the Peace on my own part, and affront none of them; and I shall persist in that Resolution: But having receiv'd much Abuse from *Titan Leeds* deceas'd (*Titan Leeds* when living would not have us'd me so!) I say, having receiv'd much Abuse from the Ghost of *Titan Leeds*, who pretends to be still living, and to write Almanacks in Spight of me and my Predictions, I can not help saying, that tho' I take it patiently, I take it very unkindly. And whatever he may pretend, 'tis undoubtedly true that he is really defunct and dead. First because the Stars are seldom disappointed, never but in the Case of wise Men, *sapiens dominabitur astris*, and they foreshow'd his Death at the Time I predicted it. Secondly, 'Twas requisite

and necessary he should die punctually at that Time, for the Honour of Astrology, the Art professed both by him and his Father before him. Thirdly, 'Tis plain to every one that reads his two last Almanacks (for 1734 and 35) that they are not written with that *Life* his Performances use to be written with; the Wit is low and flat, the little Hints dull and spiritless, nothing smart in them but *Hudibras's Verses* against Astrology at the Heads of the Months in the last, which no Astrologer but a *dead one* would have inserted, and no man *living* would or could write such Stuff as the rest.

In a later preface, Poor Richard complains that certain ill-willers of his, despited at the great reputation that he had gained by exactly predicting another man's death, had endeavored to deprive him of it all at once in the most effective manner by reporting that he himself was never alive. It was not civil treatment, he said, to endeavor to deprive him of his very being, and to reduce him to a non-entity in the opinion of the public; but, so long as he knew himself to walk about, eat, drink and sleep, he was satisfied that there was really such a man as he was, whatever they might say to the contrary. As his printer seemed as unwilling to father his offspring as he was to lose the credit of them, to clear him entirely as well as to vindicate his own honor he made this public and serious declaration, which he desired might be believed, to wit, that what he had written theretofore and did now write neither had been nor was written by any other man or men, person or persons whatsoever. Those who were not satisfied with this must needs be very unreasonable.

To cap the climax of all this fun, Poor Richard finally published, in one of his prefaces, a letter, alleged by him to have been written to him by Titan Leeds from the other world, which stated that the writer was grieved at the aspersions cast on Poor Richard by avaricious publishers of almanacs, who envied his success, and pretended that the writer remained alive many years after the hour

predicted for his death by Poor Richard, and certified that he, Titan Leeds, did die presently at that hour with a variation only of 5 m. 53 sec.; which must be allowed to be no great matter in such cases. Nay more, in this letter Titan Leeds was made to predict that another Pennsylvania philomath and competitor of Poor Richard, one John Jerman would be openly reconciled to the Church of Rome, and give all his goods and chattels to the Chapel, being perverted by a certain country schoolmaster.

In a former year, Poor Richard had already charged Jerman with making such flexible prophecies as "Snow here or in New England," "Rain here or in South Carolina," "Cold to the Northward," "Warm to the Southward." If he were to adopt that method, he said, he would not be so likely to have his mistakes detected, but he did not consider that it would be of any service to anybody to know what weather it was 1000 miles off, and therefore he always set down positively what weather his reader would have, be he where he might be at the time. All he modestly desired was only the favorable allowance of a day or two before and a day or two after the precise day against which the weather was set.

On another previous occasion, Poor Richard had made his readers a promise about Jerman which he does not seem to have ever redeemed. "When my Brother J–m–n," he said, "erected a Scheme to know which was best for his sick Horse, to sup a new-laid Egg, or a little Broth, he found that the Stars plainly gave their Verdict for Broth, and the Horse having sup'd his Broth;— Now, what do you think became of that Horse? You shall know in my next."

When the prediction of Titan Leeds from beyond the grave that Jerman would apostatize was duly published, the latter resented it; and, in his Almanac for the year 1742, Poor Richard felt it necessary to say a word about the matter himself.

My last Adversary [he declared] is J. J—n, Philomat., who *declares and protests* (in his preface, 1741) that the *false Prophecy put in my Almanack, concerning him, the Year before, is altogether* false and untrue: *and that I am one of Baal's false Prophets.* This *false, false Prophecy* he speaks of, related to his Reconciliation with the Church of Rome; which, notwithstanding his Declaring and Protesting, is, I fear, too true. Two Things in his elegiac Verses confirm me in this Suspicion. He calls the first of *November* by the name of *All Hallows Day.* Reader; does not this smell of Popery? Does it in the least savour of the pure Language of Friends? But the plainest Thing is; his Adoration of Saints, which he confesses to be his Practice, in these Words, page 4.

> "When any Trouble did me befal,
> To my dear *Mary* then I would call."

Did he think the whole World were so stupid as not to take Notice of this? So ignorant as not to know, that all Catholicks pay the highest Regard to the *Virgin Mary?* Ah! Friend *John*, we must allow you to be a *Poet*, but you are certainly no Protestant. I could heartily wish your Religion were as good as your Verses.

Mingled with the other contents of *Poor Richard's Almanac* were pointed maxims and sayings worthy of Lord John Russell's happy definition of a proverb "the wit of one and the wisdom of many," and at times first- or second-hand verses also.

Among the best of the latter are the following:

> When Robin now three days had married been,
> And all his friends and neighbours gave him joy,
> This question of his wife he asked then,
> Why till her marriage day she proved so coy?
> Indeed said he, 'twas well thou didst not yield,
> For doubtless then my purpose was to leave thee:
> O, sir, I once before was so beguil'd,
> And was resolved the next should not deceive me.

Poetry for December, 1734

By Mrs. Bridget Saunders, my Dutchess in answer to the December verses of last year.

He that for the sake of drink neglects his trade,
And spends each night in taverns till 'tis late,
And rises when the sun is four hours high,
And ne'er regards his starving family,
God in his mercy may do much to save him
But, woe to the poor wife, whose lot is to have him.

Time eateth all things, could old poets say.
But times are chang'd, our times *drink* all away

Old Batchelor would have a wife that's wise,
Fair, rich and young a maiden for his bed;
Not proud, nor churlish, but of faultless size
A country housewife in the city bred.
He's a nice fool and long in vain hath staid;
He should bespeak her, there's none ready made.

And this is Poor Richard's version of how Cupid and Campaspe played for kisses:

My love and I for kisses play'd,
She would keep stakes, I was content,
But when I won, she would be paid,
This made me ask her what she meant:
Quoth she, since you are in the wrangling vein
Here take your kisses, give me mine again.

The first preface to *Poor Richard's Almanac* appeared in the issue for 1733. In 1758, the proverbs and sayings, scattered through the preceding issues of the publication, were assembled in the *Way to Wealth* or *Father Abraham's Speech*. Even John Bach McMaster in his

brief, though admirable, work on Franklin as a man of letters found that he could not abridge this renowned production; so we offer no apology for inserting it here in its entirety:

COURTEOUS READER

I have heard that nothing gives an Author so great Pleasure, as to find his Works respectfully quoted by other learned Authors. This Pleasure I have seldom enjoyed; for tho' I have been, if I may say it without Vanity, an *eminent Author* of Almanacks annually now a full Quarter of a Century, my Brother Authors in the same Way, for what Reason I know not, have ever been very sparing in their Applauses, and no other Author has taken the least Notice of me, so that did not my Writings produce me some solid *Pudding*, the great Deficiency of *Praise* would have quite discouraged me.

I concluded at length, that the People were the best Judges of my Merit; for they buy my Works; and besides, in my Rambles, where I am not personally known, I have frequently heard one or other of my Adages repeated, with, *as Poor Richard says*, at the End on 't; this gave me some Satisfaction, as it showed not only that my Instructions were regarded, but discovered likewise some Respect for my Authority; and I own, that to encourage the Practice of remembering and repeating those wise Sentences, I have sometimes *quoted myself* with great Gravity.

Judge, then how much I must have been gratified by an Incident I am going to relate to you. I stopt my Horse lately where a great Number of People were collected at a Vendue of Merchant Goods. The Hour of Sale not being come, they were conversing on the Badness of the Times and one of the Company call'd to a plain clean old Man, with white Locks, "Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the Times? Won't these heavy Taxes quite ruin the Country? How shall we be ever able to pay them? What would you advise us to?" Father *Abraham* stood up, and reply'd, "If you'd have my Advice, I'll give it you in short, for *A Word to the Wise is enough*, and *many Words won't fill a Bushel*, as *Poor Richard*

says." They join'd in desiring him to speak his Mind, and gathering round him, he proceeded as follows;

"Friends," says he, and Neighbours, "the Taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the Government were the only Ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our *Idleness*, three times as much by our Pride, and four times as much by our *Folly;* and from these Taxes the Commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an Abatement. However let us hearken to good Advice, and something may be done for us; *God helps them that help themselves*, as *Poor Richard* says, in his Almanack of 1733.

"It would be thought a hard Government that should tax its People one-tenth Part of their *Time*, to be employed in its Service. But *Idleness* taxes many of us much more, if we reckon all that is spent in absolute *Sloth*, or doing of nothing, with that which is spent in idle Employments or Amusements, that amount to nothing. *Sloth*, by bringing on Diseases, absolutely shortens Life. *Sloth, like Rust, consumes faster than Labour wears; while the used Key is always bright* as *Poor Richard* says. *But dost thou love Life, then do not squander Time, for that's the stuff Life is made of*, as *Poor Richard* says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that *The sleeping Fox catches no Poultry*, and that *There will be sleeping enough in the Grave*, as *Poor Richard* says.

"*If Time be of all Things the most precious, wasting Time must be*, as *Poor Richard* says, *the greatest Prodigality;* since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost Time is never found again; and what we call Time enough, always proves little enough:* Let us then be up and doing, and doing to the Purpose; so by Diligence shall we do more with less Perplexity. *Sloth makes all Things difficult, but Industry all easy*, as *Poor Richard* says; and *He that riseth late must trot all Day, and shall scarce overtake his Business at Night;* while *Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him*, as we read in *Poor Richard*, who adds, *Drive thy Business, let not that drive thee;* and *Early to Bed, and early to rise, makes a Man healthy, wealthy, and wise.*

"So what signifies *wishing* and *hoping* for better Times. We

may make these Times better, if we bestir ourselves. *Industry need not wish*, as *Poor Richard* says, *and he that lives upon Hope will die fasting. There are no Gains without Pains; then Help Hands, for I have no Lands*, or if I have, they are smartly taxed. And, as *Poor Richard* likewise observes, *He that hath a Trade hath an Estate; and he that hath a Calling, hath an Office of Profit* and Honour; but then the *Trade* must be worked at, and the *Calling* well followed, or neither the *Estate* nor the *Office* will enable us to pay our Taxes. If we are industrious, we shall never starve; for, as *Poor Richard* says, *At the working Man's House Hunger looks in, but dares not enter.* Nor will the Bailiff or the Constable enter, for *Industry pays Debts, while Despair encreaseth them*, says *Poor Richard.* What though you have found no Treasure, nor has any rich Relation left you a Legacy, *Diligence is the Mother of Goodluck* as *Poor Richard* says *and God gives all Things to Industry. Then plough deep, while Sluggards sleep, and you shall have Corn to sell and to keep*, says *Poor Dick.* Work while it is called To-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered To-morrow, which makes *Poor Richard* say, *One to-day is worth two To-morrows*, and farther, *Have you somewhat to do To-morrow, do it To-day.* If you were a Servant, would you not be ashamed that a good Master should catch you idle? Are you then your own Master, *be ashamed to catch yourself idle*, as *Poor Dick* says. When there is so much to be done for yourself, your Family, your Country, and your gracious King, be up by Peep of Day; *Let not the Sun look down and say, Inglorious here he lies.* Handle your Tools without Mittens; remember that *The Cat in Gloves catches no Mice*, as *Poor Richard* says. 'Tis true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed, but stick to it steadily; and you will see great Effects, for *Constant Dropping wears away Stones*, and by *Diligence and Patience the Mouse ate in two the Cable;* and *Little Strokes fell great Oaks*, as *Poor Richard* says in his Almanack, the Year I cannot just now remember.

" Methinks I hear some of you say, *Must a Man afford himself no Leisure?* I will tell thee, my friend, what *Poor Richard* says, *Employ thy Time well, if thou meanest to gain Leisure; and, since thou are not sure of a Minute, throw not away an Hour.*

Leisure is Time for doing something useful; this Leisure the diligent Man will obtain, but the lazy Man never; so that, as *Poor Richard* says *A Life of Leisure and a Life of Laziness are two Things.* Do you imagine that Sloth will afford you more Comfort than Labour? No, for as *Poor Richard* says, *Trouble springs from Idleness, and grievous Toil from needless Ease. Many without Labour, would live by their Wits only, but they break for want of Stock.* Whereas Industry gives Comfort, and Plenty, and Respect: *Fly Pleasures, and they'll follow you. The diligent Spinner has a large Shift; and now I have a Sheep and a Cow, everybody bids me good Morrow;* all which is well said by *Poor Richard.*

"But with our Industry, we must likewise be *steady, settled,* and *careful,* and oversee our own Affairs *with our own Eyes,* and not trust too much to others; for, as *Poor Richard* says

I never saw an oft-removed Tree,
Nor yet an oft-removed Family,
That throve so well as those that settled be.

And again, *Three Removes is as bad as a Fire;* and again, *Keep thy Shop, and thy Shop will keep thee;* and again, *If you would have your Business done, go; if not, send,* and again,

He that by the Plough would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive.

And again, *The Eye of a Master will do more Work than both his Hands;* and again, *Want of Care does us more Damage than Want of Knowledge;* and again, *Not to oversee Workmen, is to leave them your Purse open.* Trusting too much to others' Care is the Ruin of many; for, as the Almanack says, *In the Affairs of this World, Men are saved, not by Faith, but by the Want of it;* but a Man's own Care is profitable; for, saith *Poor Dick, Learning is to the Studious,* and *Riches to the Careful,* as well as *Power to the Bold, and Heaven to the Virtuous.* And farther, *If you would have a faithful Servant, and one that you like, serve yourself.* And again, he adviseth to Circumspection and Care, even in the smallest Matters, because sometimes *A little Neglect may breed great Mischief;* adding, *for want of a*

Nail the Shoe was lost; for want of a Shoe the Horse was lost; and for want of a Horse the Rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the Enemy; all for want of Care about a Horse-shoe Nail.

So much for Industry, my Friends, and Attention to one's own Business; but to these we must add *Frugality*, if we would make our *Industry* more certainly successful. A Man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, *keep his Nose all his Life to the Grindstone*, and die not worth a Groat at last. A *fat Kitchen makes a lean Will*, as *Poor Richard* says; and

> *Many Estates are spent in the Getting,*
> *Since Women for Tea forsook Spinning and Knitting,*
> *And Men for Punch forsook Hewing and Splitting.*

If you would be wealthy, says he, in another Almanack, *think of Saving as well as of Getting: The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her Outgoes are greater than her Incomes.*

Away then with your expensive Follies, and you will not then have so much Cause to complain of hard Times, heavy Taxes, and chargeable Families; for, as *Poor Dick* says,

> Women and Wine, Game and Deceit,
> Make the Wealth small and the Wants great.

And farther, *What maintains one Vice, would bring up two Children.* You may think perhaps, that a *little* Tea, or a *little* Punch now and then, Diet a *little* more costly, Clothes, a *little* finer, and a *little* Entertainment now and then, can be no *great* Matter; but remember what *Poor Richard* says, *Many a Little makes a Mickle;* and farther, *Beware of little Expences; A small Leak will sink a great Ship;* and again, *Who Dainties love, shall Beggars prove;* and moreover, *Fools make Feasts, and wise Men eat them.*

"Here you are all got together at this Vendue of *Fineries* and *Knicknacks.* You call them *Goods;* but if you do not take Care, they will prove *Evils* to some of you. You expect they will be sold *Cheap*, and perhaps they may for less than they cost; but if you have no Occasion for them, they must be *dear* to you. Remember what *Poor Richard* says; *Buy what*

thou hast no Need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy Necessaries. And again, *At a great Pennyworth pause a while:* He means, that perhaps the Cheapness is *apparent* only, and not *Real;* or the bargain by straitening thee in thy Business, may do thee more Harm than Good. For in another Place he says, *Many have been ruined by buying good Pennyworths.* Again, *Poor Richard* says, 'tis *foolish to lay out Money in a Purchase of Repentance;* and yet this Folly is practised every Day at Vendues, for want of minding the Almanack. *Wise Men,* as *Poor Dick* says, *learn by others Harms, Fools scarcely by their own;* but *felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.* Many a one, for the Sake of Finery on the Back, have gone with a hungry Belly, and half-starved their Families. *Silks and Sattins, Scarlet and Velvets,* as *Poor Richard* says, *put out the Kitchen Fire.*

These are not the *Necessaries* of Life; they can scarcely be called the *Conveniences;* and yet only because they look pretty, how many *want* to *have* them! The *artificial* Wants of Mankind thus become more numerous than the *Natural;* and, as *Poor Dick* says, *for one poor Person, there are an hundred indigent.* By these, and other Extravagancies, the Genteel are reduced to poverty, and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who through Industry and Frugality have maintained their Standing; in which Case it appears plainly, that *A Ploughman on his Legs is higher than a Gentleman on his Knees,* as *Poor Richard* says. Perhaps they have had a small Estate left them, which they knew not the Getting of; they think, *'tis Day, and will never be Night;* that a little to be spent out of so much, is not worth minding; *a Child and a Fool,* as *Poor Richard* says, *imagine Twenty shillings and Twenty Years can never be spent* but, *always taking out of the Meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the Bottom;* as *Poor Dick* says, *When the Well's dry, they know the Worth of Water.* But this they might have known before, if they had taken his Advice; *If you would know the Value of Money, go and try to borrow some; for, he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing;* and indeed so does he that lends to such People, when he goes *to get it in again. Poor Dick* farther advises, and says,

Fond Pride of Dress is sure a very Curse;
E'er Fancy you consult, consult your Purse.

And again, *Pride is as loud a Beggar as Want, and a great deal more saucy.* When you have bought one fine Thing, you must buy ten more, that your Appearance may be all of a Piece; but *Poor Dick* says, *'Tis easier to suppress the first Desire, than to satisfy all that follow it.* And 'tis as truly Folly for the Poor to ape the Rich, as for the Frog to swell, in order to equal the ox.

Great Estates may venture more,
But little Boats should keep near Shore.

'Tis, however, a Folly soon punished; for *Pride that dines on Vanity, sups on Contempt,* as *Poor Richard* says. And in another Place, *Pride breakfasted with Plenty, dined with Poverty, and supped with Infamy.* And after all, of what Use is this *Pride of Appearance,* for which so much is risked so much is suffered? It cannot promote Health, or ease Pain; it makes no Increase of Merit in the Person, it creates Envy, it hastens Misfortune.

What is a Butterfly? At best
He's but a Caterpillar drest
The gaudy Fop's his Picture just,

as *Poor Richard* says.

"But what Madness must it be to *run in Debt* for these Superfluities! We are offered, by the Terms of this Vendue, *Six Months' Credit;* and that perhaps has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spare the ready Money, and hope now to be fine without it. But, ah, think what you do when you run in Debt; *you give to another Power over your Liberty.* If you cannot pay at the Time, you will be ashamed to see your Creditor; you will be in Fear when you speak to him; you will make poor pitiful sneaking Excuses, and by Degrees come to lose your Veracity, and sink into base downright lying; for, as *Poor Richard* says *The second Vice is Lying, the first is running in Debt.* And again, to the same Purpose, *Lying rides upon Debt's Back.* Whereas a free-born *Englishman* ought not to

be ashamed or afraid to see or speak to any Man living. But Poverty often deprives a Man of all Spirit and Virtue: *'Tis hard for an empty Bag to stand upright*, as *Poor Richard* truly says.

"What would you think of that Prince, or that Government, who should issue an Edict forbidding you to dress like a Gentleman or a Gentlewoman, on Pain of Imprisonment or Servitude? Would you not say, that you were free, have a Right to dress as you please, and that such an Edict would be a Breach of your Privileges, and such a Government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put yourself under that Tyranny, when you run in Debt for such Dress! Your Creditor has Authority, at his Pleasure to deprive you of your Liberty, by confining you in Goal for Life, or to sell you for a Servant, if you should not be able to pay him! When you have got your Bargain, you may, perhaps, think little of Payment; but *Creditors*, *Poor Richard* tells us, *have better Memories than Debtors; and* in another Place says, *Creditors are a superstitious Sect, great Observers of set Days and Times.* The Day comes round before you are aware, and the Demand is made before you are prepared to satisfy it, Or if you bear your Debt in Mind, the Term which at first seemes so long, will, as it lessens, appear extreamly short. *Time* will seem to have added Wings to his Heels as well as Shoulders. *Those have a short Lent*, saith *Poor Richard, who owe Money to be paid at Easter.* Then since, as he says, *The Borrower is a Slave to the Lender, and the Debtor to the Creditor*, disdain the Chain, preserve your Freedom; and maintain your Independency; Be *industrious* and *free;* be *frugal* and *free.* At present, perhaps, you may think yourself in thriving Circumstances, and that you can bear a little Extravagance without Injury; but,

For Age and Want, save while you may;
No Morning Sun lasts a whole Day.

as *Poor Richard* says. Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever while you live, Expence is constant and certain; and *'tis easier to build two Chimnies, than to keep one in Fuel*, as *Poor Richard* says. So, *Rather go to Bed supperless than rise in Debt.*

Get what you can, and what you get hold;
'Tis the Stone that will turn all your lead into Gold,

as *Poor Richard* says. And when you have got the Philosopher's Stone, sure you will no longer complain of bad Times, or the Difficulty of paying Taxes.

"This Doctrine, my Friends, is *Reason* and *Wisdom;* but after all, do not depend too much upon your own *Industry*, and *Frugality*, and *Prudence*, though excellent Things, for they may all be blasted without the Blessing of Heaven; and therefore, ask that Blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember, *Job* suffered, and was afterwards prosperous.

"And now to conclude, *Experience keeps a dear School, but Fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that;* for it is true, *we may give Advice, but we cannot give Conduct*, as *Poor Richard* says: However, remember this, *They that won't be counselled, can't be helped*, as *Poor Richard* says: and farther, That, *if you will not hear Reason, she'll surely rap your Knuckles.*"

Thus the old Gentleman ended his Harangue. The People heard it and approved the Doctrine, and immediately practised the contrary, just as if it had been a common Sermon; for the Vendue opened, and they began to buy extravagantly, notwithstanding, his Cautions and their own Fear of Taxes. I found the good Man had thoroughly studied my Almanacks, and digested all I had dropt on these Topicks during the Course of Five and twenty Years. The frequent Mention he made of me must have tired any one else, but my Vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious that not a tenth Part of the Wisdom was my own, which he ascribed to me, but rather the *Gleanings* I had made of the Sense of all Ages and Nations. However, I resolved to be the better for the Echo of it; and though I had at first determined to buy Stuff for a new Coat, I went away resolved to wear my old One a little longer. *Reader*, if thou wilt do the same, thy Profit will be as great as mine, I *am, as ever, thine to serve thee,*

RICHARD SAUNDERS.

Imperfect as this chapter is, it is adequate enough, we hope, to make the reader feel that Sydney Smith was not altogether insensible to natural obligations when he told his daughter that he would disinherit her, if she did not admire everything written by Franklin.

SUMMARY

Such was Benjamin Franklin, as mirrored for the most part in his own written and oral utterances. Whether his fame is measured by what he actually accomplished, or by the impression that he made upon his contemporaries, or by the influence that he still exercises over the human mind, he was a truly great man.[1] Not simply because he was one of the principal actors in a revolutionary movement destined to establish in the free air of the Western World on lasting foundations, and on a scale of moral and material grandeur, of which history furnishes few examples, a state, without king, noble or pontiff, and deriving its inspiration and energy solely from the will of the People; nor yet merely because his brilliant discoveries in the province of electricity conspicuously helped to convert one of the most elusive and defiant of all the forces of nature into an humble and useful drudge of modern industry and progress; nor yet merely because, in addition to many other productions, marked by the indefinable charm of unerring literary intuition, he wrote several which are read in every part of the globe where a printed page is read; nor even because of all these things combined. They are, of course, the main pillars upon which his splendid fame rests. But what imparts to Franklin his aspect of greatness, and endows him with his irresistible appeal to the interest and admiration of the whole human race is the

[1] In the judgment of Matthew Arnold, Franklin was "a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom America has yet produced."

striking extent to which he was, in point of both precept and example, representative of human existence in all its more rational, more fruitful and more sympathetic manifestations. His vision was not that of the enthusiast; his was no Pentecostal tongue—cloven and aflame. He took little account of the higher spiritual forces which at times derange all the sober, prudent calculations of such a materialist as Poor Richard, and his message to mankind was blemished, as we have seen, by the excessive emphasis placed by it upon pecuniary thrift and the relations of pecuniary thrift to sound morals as well as physical comfort. But all the same, limited to the terrestrial horizon as he is, he must be reckoned one of the great leaders and teachers of humanity. He loved existence, shared it joyously and generously with his fellow-creatures, and vindicated its essential worth by bringing to bear upon everything connected with the conduct of life the maxims of a serene and almost infallible wisdom, and by responding with a mind as completely free from the prejudices and errors of his age as if he had lived a hundred years later, and with a heart as completely unconstrained by local considerations as if men were all of one blood and one country, to every suggestion that tended to make human beings happier, more intelligent and worthier in every respect of the universe which he found so delightful. It is this harmony with the world about him, this insight into what that world requires of everyone who seeks, to make his way in it, this enlightenment, this sympathy with human aspirations and needs everywhere, together with the rare strain of graphic and kindly instruction by which they were accompanied that cause the name of Franklin to be so often associated with those of the other great men whose fame is not the possession of a single class or land, but of all mankind. The result is that, when the faces of the few individuals, who are recognized by the entire world as having in the different ages of human

history rendered service to the entire world, are ranged in plastic repose above the shelves of some public library or along the walls of some other institution, founded for the promotion of human knowledge or well-being, the calm, meditative face of Franklin is rarely missing.

It is to be regretted that a character so admirable and amiable in all leading respects as his, so strongly fortified by the cardinal virtues of modesty, veracity, integrity and courage, and so sweetly flavored with all the finer charities of human benevolence and affection, should in some particulars have fallen short of proper standards of conduct. But it is only just to remember that the measure of his lapses from correct conduct is mainly to be found in humorous license, for which the best men of his own age, like Dr. Price and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, had only a laugh,[1] and in offences against sexual morality, which, except so far as they assumed in his youth the form of casual intercourse with low women, whose reputations were already too sorely injured to be further wounded, consisted altogether in the adoption by a singularly versatile nature of a foreign code of manners which imposed upon the members of the society, by which it was formed, the necessity of affecting the language of gallantry even when gallantry itself was not actually practised. There is at any rate no evidence to show that the long married life of Franklin, so full of domestic concord and tenderness, was ever sullied by the slightest violation of conjugal fidelity.

On the whole, therefore, it is not strange that, repelled as we are at times by some passing episode or revelation

[1] In his *Jeu d'esprit*, commonly known as *The Choice of a Mistress*, Franklin gave various reasons why an elderly mistress should be preferred to a younger one; and, in a letter to him on Aug. 12, 1777, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, after expressing the hope that he continued to enjoy his usual health and the flow of spirits, which contributed to make the jaunt to Canada so agreeable to his fellow-travellers, adds: "Mr. John Carroll, and Chase are both well; the latter is now at Congress, and has been so fully and constantly employed that I believe he has not had leisure to refute your reasons in favor of the old ladies."

in his life or character, everyone who has lingered upon his career finds it hard to turn away from it except with something akin to the feelings of those friends who clung to him so fondly. He was so kind, so considerate, so affectionate, so eager to do good, both to individuals and whole communities, that we half forget the human conventions that his bountiful intellect and heart overflowed. Of him it can at least be said that, if he had some of a man's failings, he had all of a man's merits; and his biographer, in taking leave of him, may well, mindful of his eminent virtues as well as of his brilliant achievements and services, waive all defence of the few vulnerable features of his life and conduct by summing up the final balance of his deserts in the single word engraved upon the pedestal of one of his busts in Paris at the time of his death. That word was "Vir"—a Man, a very Man.

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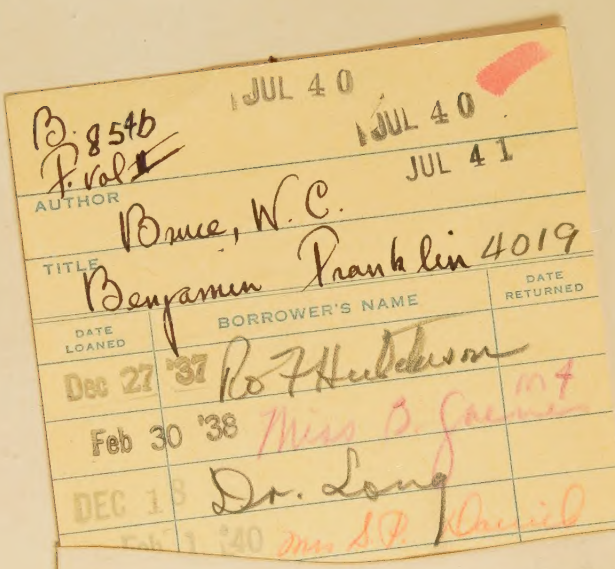

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